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ABSTRACT

The following papers relevant to second language instruction are compiled here: (1) "The Three Most Critical Issues in Foreign-Language Education Today," by Lorraine A. Strasheim; (2) "A Bird's Eye View of Bilingualism in Canada," by Chavarche Tchalekian; (3) "'...To Educate the Multi-Faceted and Harmoniously Developed Socialist Personality...': The Educational System of the German Democratic Republic," by Michael J. Ziemann; (4) "Orthographic Strategies of a Selected Sample of Students of English as a Second Language," by Margaretta B. Warbey and Joseph F. Kess; (5) "The Effect of First Language Learning on Second Foreign Language Learning: Another Argument for Language Study in American Education," by Peter A. Eddy and Elissa Natelson Allen; (6) "A Rationale for Videodisc-Assisted Foreign Language Learning," by Wendell H. Hall; (7) "Cognates and False Friends," by Horst Martin; (8) "Oral Proficiency Testing in High School and College: Why and How?" by Claus Reschke; and (9) "The Undergraduate Foreign Language Curriculum: Suggestions for a Change," by R. Vance Savage. (JB)

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# THE THREE MOST CRITICAL ISSUES IN FOREIGN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION TODAY

Lorraine A. Strasheim
Indiana University

We do not like to admit it, but, as Francis Bacon asserted centuries ago, "These are the ancient times, when the world is ancient, and not those which we account ancient by a computation backwards from ourselves." And in these "ancient" times there are some things of which we can be certain--whether or not the Presidential Commission comes to pass, despite the "back to the basics" movement, and even in an environment of strengthened requirements and rising standards. In the society, the confrontations of pluralistic value systems will undoubtedly both continue and proliferate. In education, it is highly unlikely that there will be dramatic increases in school funding or decreases in the numbers of special-interest groups seeking pieces of the curricular "pie." There are three areas, however, in which we professional foreign-language teachers can work to take control of our destinies, our imperatives for the near future, as it were.

The first critical issue is that of professional cohesion. Few other disciplines and subject-matter areas have the numbers and kinds of divisions we foreign-language people do. Look at just a few of our "divisions."

1. The teachers of the various languages--five "commonly taught" languages and an infinite number of "uncommonly taught" ones--have opposed each other in their efforts to achieve "balance" and/or "equal" treatment. This process has created what I call "professional ethnics," Spanish, French, German, Russian, and Latin teachers who see all the teachers of languages other than their own as competitors or enemies.
2. The teachers at the different levels--elementary, secondary, and college--have found it difficult to reconcile their interests without establishing a "pecking order."
3. Varied kinds of specialists--teacher trainers, researchers, linguists, supervisors, and the like--have competed for attention and projects.
4. The innovators--the career education people, the values clarification advocates, the "individualizers," the culture specialists, the communicative competence adherents--all are competing against one another for teacher audiences, journal pages, program slots, and curriculum time.
5. Foreign-language and bilingual educators are jockeying for position.

The result is a Tower of Babel in which each segment responds to the question "Who speaks for foreign languages?" with "We all do--individually," and so, in fact, no one speaks for foreign languages at all.

Can't we French, German, Spanish, Latin, Russian, Chinese, and bilingual educators, we teacher trainers, linguists, researchers, bibliographers, department chairpersons, consultants, and coordinators finally unite under a single banner? Can't all of us proudly carry a banner that tells the country and the world that we are foreign-language teachers? Aren't we yet mature enough to say first, "I am a foreign-language teacher," and then identify the specific language?

Can't we, too, in the process, adopt a "negotiation" or "collaboration" model rather than the adversary model we have taken from business and industry? Can't we learn, as Herbert Kohl has urged, "how to debate internally and unite externally"?[1] Can't we preserve the rights of our minorities while, at last, defining a direction for all, a direction for foreign-language education?

Are we not yet ready to welcome into our profession those teachers who presently feel alienated or threatened--the teachers teaching in two or more disciplinary areas, for example? In Indiana only 45% of the teachers are employed fulltime in foreign languages; many teachers are teaching two and three levels in one class period. Can we find room in our professional "inn" for these people? Are we willing to rethink some of our professional activities and services to encompass these people? And make no mistake about it, these people who are "hanging on by their fingernails" have done more to preserve foreign-language education than many of us--and under far more trying circumstances.

Are we also ready to try to bring about some innovative syntheses to take the burden off the already overloaded classroom teacher? Can't we get the career education people and the advocates of communicative competence together, for instance, or the "individualizers" together with the culture specialists, in an effort to "get our act together"?

The membership of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages feels that the time has come to face the issue of professional cohesion and the "real world" of the teacher squarely, for in 1976, ACTFL's members made the following recommendation:

> In order to build greater professional cohesion;
> to provide for ongoing exchange and problem-solving; and
> to assure ACTFL's focus on the real problems of real teachers
>
> ACTFL should provide on a regular basis for a variety of teacher groups
> to identify prime curricular concerns;
> to work toward more successful articulation;

to assess public relations and program needs;
to identify needed research; and
to consider group-specific issues.

And professional cohesion is not a matter of geography. Teachers in Grand Island, Nebraska; Kokomo, Indiana; Basalt, Colorado; Mission, Kansas; and Madison, Wisconsin who cannot communicate today because meetings are not being held near them simply do not understand today's world. I do not attend the Democratic National Convention, but I am a voting member and have a voice in the party. Professional cohesion comes from a drive within, a personal value system. Membership in ACTFL and your language-specific organization comes to about two dollars and fifty cents a month. Is a career worth it? If foreign-language education is of so little value to its teachers, how can the public value it more than they?

The second critical issue identified by the ACTFL membership was that of curriculum, for we have given lip service to diversified curricula but little else. The members recommended the following.

In order to attract more students to and hold them in foreign-language programs;
to solve the problems of presenting too much too rapidly for student mastery;
to address the problems of articulation;
to meet the needs and interests of learners of different ages, a diversity of learning styles, and a variety of needs and interests;
to help teachers cope with the professional "overchoice" in teaching foci and options;
to stimulate inservice training; and
to build professional pride

ACTFL should promote, perhaps through "working" pre-conferences, clear and minimal definitions for every level and every type of foreign-language offering, of
a working rationale;
goals and objectives;
subject matter;
learning outcomes;
teaching strategies;
testing and measurement; and
program evaluation.

Documents of this kind, once they have been prepared or identified, with guidelines for adaptation to the specific school's, system's, or institution's need and population, should be made available through Foreign Language Annals and/or the ACTFL Materials Center.

Every kind of foreign-language offering that exists--and there is room for an infinite variety for every age and level of learner--has to be able to demonstrate the learning outcomes, what the student can do as a result of his or her study, whether that offering be given in the elementary school, as a part of a college requirement, or under the auspices of continuing education. The key to our problems is not to try to persuade the public to accept our so-called "standard" sequence, but to devise options. Standards may be stiffened, but options are a fact of educational life.

While the schools have made greater strides toward curricular diversification than the colleges and universities, much of what passes for curricular change is a cosmetic reordering of the same old content. The learner--be s/he six, sixteen, or sixty--has goals of his or her own which must be accommodated or s/he will find another classroom and another discipline. To the devout green-bean hater, it does not matter whether they are baked or boiled, seasoned with tomato and bacon, or covered with cheese sauce; the trick is to serve a vegetable that will go down--carrots, peas, cauliflower, whatever. It is not the language the learner hates, it is what s/he is being forced to do with and in it--or not being allowed to do with and in it.

Of late I have been much more successful in dealing with elementary-school educators because I no longer confront them with a single option--FLES as part of a six- to nine-year sequence. Today I can offer them experiential components linked to language arts and/or social studies, exploratory programs, Latin FLES, immersion programs, or the standard FLES offering--language programs to fit the needs and interests of a student population, the philosophy of the school, and the specific community.

We should not fear diversity, for we should be the "quality control," defining and producing the learning outcomes, in an ongoing developmental and evaluative process. Or is it that we fear learning new things ourselves?

The third issue identified by the ACTFL membership may be classed as "educational communication" if we can but remember to listen as well as to speak and to learn as well as to "preach."

In order to strengthen the role of foreign languages in American life;
to influence administrators and decision-makers; and
to foster intramural cooperation and interaction with colleagues in other disciplines

ACTFL should develop a rationale for foreign-language learning which encompasses learners of all ages, all levels, and all aspirations and publicize the rationale through
the Advertising Council of America and its free public service advertisements in magazines and on television and radio;

through audience-specific publications and articles in the professional journals of administrators, curriculum directors, guidance counselors, and colleagues in other disciplines; and
through cooperation with other professional and educational associations and organizations.

This educational communication is in the realm of the "do-able" if we can remember to negotiate, to listen, and to learn.

Subsumed here is our great need to establish some open lines to our nonlanguage colleagues in education. We must endeavor to learn what they are about (note what comes first) and keep them informed as to our goals, objectives, and activities. We cannot lose sight of the fact that foreign languages are involved in an ongoing effort to find "curricular fit" in our country's schools and colleges, a place and a role in the construct of education, so, since we are the communication experts, we must build some bridges.

We can begin by building some bridges in our own institutions. One mode of entre is through our members who are parttime in two fields--the teacher of German and mathematics, the teacher of French and English, and the professor who is 50% FTE in Comparative Literature and 50% in the Modern Language Department teaching Russian. Our journals and newsletters should be giving us news and notes on other disciplines as well as our own "inhouse" undertakings and some state and national bridges to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the National Council for the Social Studies, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National Council of Teachers of English, to mention but a few. We have much to learn and some to teach, but we shall only be walled off if we choose to be. We can gain support of our colleagues in other disciplines only if:

1. We are informed about and support their programs;
2. We keep them up-to-date as to what we are about, interchanging and utilizing their expertise; and
3. We support the total educational program.

To those who say they are too busy for these sorts of initiatives, I suggest that you reevaluate <u>how</u> you are busy and look seriously at the probable futures involved. Foreign-language education is on the verge of building the greatest support the discipline has known, if we but have the sense not to "blow" this opportunity.

While there are some things which can be done at the national level to try to strengthen the role of foreign languages in American life, infinitely more can be done on a community, regional, state, or "surround" level. We need to invite the community into our schools and institutions more and to go out into the community to participate in its functions more frequently. <u>The community is our clientele, our support system, and our consumer protection agency</u>. It is well past time to stop sloganeering and to start some earnest communication efforts. One of our local schools built more community support through sending students to work with their parents for one day as a part of their career education efforts than almost any other single activity in the year.

The public is densely populated with people who have had foreign-language experiences which, at best, can be deemed unfortunate. We need to find out:

1. What the public expects of foreign-language programs;
2. What community members are involved in groups or careers involving languages; and
3. What the range of opportunitites is for interaction.

In turn, we need to communicate to the public:

1. What our foreign-language programs are all about today;
2. What students will be able to do in the language--both if they take all that the program offers and if they take the most commonly pursued block of offerings--say two years, and we need to be as honest and realistic as possible.

Let's stop talking about what is "covered" and talk about what is assimilated and what can be done with the skills acquired, making certain that skills <u>are</u> acquired through an emphasis on skill-using, an emphasis on communication.

Every recruitment slogan, every promotional "gimmick," even to the lowly bumper sticker is regarded as an instructional I.O.U. by students and by their parents and the community. Let's recruit and promote responsibly and realistically and not accept students for whom we have not "made room" in our classrooms or our curricula. Irresponsible recruiting and wheedling students into language study only until the class is scheduled and being held is the worst kind of communication with today's and tomorrow's community. Everyone of us at every level needs to temper his or her claims with reason.

When we leave this meeting, it will be terribly easy to forget about doing anything, for each of us has a comfortable routine to slide back into. For those who need more motivation to consider becoming activist for professional cohesion, let me try one final argument, this one by Arthur Hoppe.

> All schooling, all teaching and learning, want a value base. In our society, that base is to be found in the enduring tenets of democracy, in the basic beliefs of the Judaic-Christian

traditions, in our persistent concern for the optimum freedom and development of every individual together with the highest possible quality of human living for all groups and for society as a whole. So if art be taught in the schools, this is why; or math or science or history or literature or whatever. It is the quality of our living together that is enhanced by the best possible development of each individual. It is the quality of the experience that people have in school that helps them to develop personal meanings and judgments, and preferences for the true and the just, the good and the beautiful. Thus, it is the improvement of the human condition that is the special concern of those who deal with curriculum and instruction.[2]

It is as Aristotle said: "Political society exists for the sake of great actions, and not of mere companionship." In this context, it would be remiss of me, as president of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, not to urge you to join ACTFL, not for what ACTFL can do for you, but for what ACTFL can help you to do for all of us and for the learners of all ages of this country.

For those of you not yet convinced that foreign-language education's need for diversified curricula is a compelling one, I offer you a poem by Albert Collum.

> Where is my place in your puzzle, teach?
> Do I fit?
> Or am I one piece too many?
> Tell me for real, teach!
> I know there's no room for me on your bulletin board,
> but do I have a place in your puzzle?[3]

That is the question upcoming generations of potential learners will be asking foreign-language educators at every level: "Do I have a place in your puzzle?"

For those of you unwilling--as yet--to engage in two-way educational communication, I give you George B. Leonard.

> Every child, every person can delight in learning.
> A new education is already here, thrusting up in
> spite of every barrier we have been able to build.
> Why not help it happen?[4]

"These are the ancient times, when the world is ancient, and not those which we account ancient, by a computation backwards from ourselves." The problems do not change from decade to decade only the responses may. What's yours?

## Notes

[1]Herbert Kohl, "What America Needs to Do Next," Mother Jones, Volume I, Number VII (September/October 1976), p. 26.

[2]"Critical Realities in School and Society," in James John Jelinek, editor, Improving the Human Condition: A Curricular Response to Critical Realities (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1978), p. 2.

[3]Albert Collum, The Geranium on the Windowsill Just Died But Teacher You Went Right On (Holland: Harlan Quist, Incorporated, 1971), p. 54.

[4]George B. Leonard, Education and Ecstasy (New York: Delacorte Press, 1968), p. 239.

# A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF BILINGUALISM IN CANADA

Chavarche Tchalekian
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Bilingualism may seem to the outside world a recent issue in Canada in light of the November, 1976 election of René Levesque whose Parti Québecois espouses separatism. Nevertheless, bilingualism has been fostered by the federal government since the Official Languages Act of September 7, 1967. This Act came into effect confirming the equal status of French and English and formally declaring them the official languages with regard to Parliament and the government of Canada. This Act also created the post of Commissioner of Official Languages whose duty was to ensure that the services of the federal government be provided in both French and English. Thus Canada officially became a bilingual country with unilingual citizens.[1]

To understand the current conflict between Canada's two major language groups, French and English, one should go back into history to the British North America Act of 1867 which is also referred to as Canada's Constitution. Although this Act makes no mention of language as such, section 133 states that either English or French may be used by any person in the debates of the Parliament in Canada or the Legislature of Quebec or before any court of Canada including Quebec. In recent years this section has often been cited by French Canadians as authority for the use of the French language outside Quebec.[2]

For a long time, within Quebec secondary education was entrusted to the privately operated Collèges Classiques, oriented toward the education of a small élite. As late as 1960 it was rare that tax-supported schools in Quebec offered education in French beyond the sixth-grade.[3] With regard to economics in Quebec, nearly all the capital that made possibe the economic development of the province was English-Canadian or from the United States and its control has remained largely in the same hands. This economic situation has only reinforced the existing cultural barrier. Class lines tended to emphasize the ethnic division, resulting in little social contact between the two language groups.

Two factors that may have contributed to Quebec's drive to maintain its language and culture are these: first, the birth-rate of French Canadians declined. Although the birth-rate had dropped everywhere in North America, it was particularly dramatic in Quebec.[4] The second factor is the influx of immigrants from overseas, particularly Italians, and their conflicts with the Francophones of Montreal.[5] These immigrants have tended to become part of the English community in Montreal, rejecting French. Even though the French Canadian population has been roughly 30% of Canada's total population, for years Francophones were resigned to being a minority. Now, however, they are determined to maintain their cultural identity. The anglicisation of French Canadians living outside of Quebec has been going on at an accelerated rate since 1921. In 1961, 34% of them knew no French. In Quebec, however less than 1% of the population of French origin spoke only English. This drain on the French-language community has been a major argument advanced by Quebec separatists to bolster their demands for independence.[6]

With the 1963 terrorist bombings in Montreal, the Front de Liberation Quebecois(FLQ) succeeded in focusing national attention on French Canadian political unrest. English Canada then began to fear that what was happening in Quebec might have disruptive consequences in the rest of Canada.[7] In the same year a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was established to study problems between the two major language groups. Since this was mainly a fact-finding commission, it offered no recommendations; it did, however, publish critical comments made by individuals from each language group.[8] These comments reflected mutual distrust and suspicion.

In June 1973, a Resolution concerning the Official Languages in the Public Service of Canada was passed. In the Treasury Board Circular which followed this Resolution, it was explained that the departments and agencies of the government require that by December 31, 1978 personnel in positions designated as bilingual should be fully bilingual.[9] In the rush toward bilingualism, many positions were unnecessarily designated as bilingual and many decisions so classified do not correspond to the real needs of the social environment nor do they require the use of both official languages. Thus it is impossible to motivate an intelligent public servant to learn a second language when he knows that he will not use it in his work.[10] The purpose of the creation of bilingual positions in the federal civil service was to enable Quebec Francophones to occupy 30% of the posts instead of the less than 15% formerly held by them. In order to achieve the 30% target in 10 years, 1500 new Francophones would have to be hired annually during the same number of years.[11]

The task of creating bilingual civil servants fell to the Language Bureau. Bilingual positions are classified in a range from 01 to 04, 04 being the lowest category. Thus, a person able to express himself in isolated words, expressions of two or three words, and simple, disconnected phrases (for example, greetings, taking leave, simple requests, etc.) is classified as bilingual 04.[12] With regard to achievement, four levels of bilingualism were established with priorities in the following order: comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. To achieve what is called "functional bilingualism," the candidate must receive a score of 3 for comprehension and speaking and 2 for reading and writing, five being the top of the scale.

The Language Bureau adopted audio-visual methods as opposed to the so-called traditional grammar methods and developed a course called Dialogue Canada. This consists of filmstrips and cassettes, something in the genre of Voix et Images de France except that it was intended to be French-Canadian in content. There is also a grammar exercise book, Approche traditionelle, which may be used at the instructor's discretion in conjunction with the course. The authors wanted to institute a program of their own without looking into theoretical problems and certain proven techniques from existing methods which were available to them. According to the Bibeau Report, "a sometimes interesting product has emerged but its logic has left something to be desired at all times."[13] As has been proven in recent years, a strictly audio-visual program is no sure panacea to language learning. Thus it comes as no surprise to find that the immersion courses which were established for civil servants who were supposed to learn the second language rapidly, had discouraging results in the tests administered at the end of the course.

In 1974 the Treasury Board of Canada commissioned an independent team of experts, headed by Dr. Gilles Bibeau of the University of Montreal, to make a study of the language training in the Canadian Public Service. It took two years to complete the twelve-volume study which appeared in August 1976. Since I have had experience in using Dialogue Canada and have also read the Bibeau Report, I think it is unfortunate that the Treasury Board has thus far issued no directive to the Language Bureau to modify its program according to the excellent recommendations made in the Bibeau Report. The Report offers lengthy general and specific recommendations, the greater proportion falling into the categories of teachers, methods and testing. With regard to the first category, the Language Bureau because of the large number of teachers required, engaged many whose qualifications were minimal. Most of them, graduates from Quebec universities with a B.A., attended a two to three week orientation session in the teaching of the second language and were immediately sent out to perform their duties without further preparation. The Bibeau Report suggested that teachers should have at least two years' prior teaching experience and a B.A. with a specialization in applied linguistics, learning psychology, literature of the language taught, language teaching or adult education. The ideal profile would be a blend of all these elements.[14] In addition, the teachers should not only be bilingual but also bicultural, the former for understanding the students' linguistic difficulties, the latter in order to understand the psychological and sociological make-up of the student.[15]

With respect to teaching methods and materials, the Bibeau study indicated that the methods used by the Language Bureau were designed to produce an assembly-line output which did not take into consideration the needs of individuals. The Report was critical of the teaching of French purely through a videotape, tape-recorder and mechanical repetition of information by the student.[16] The Report also expressed criticism of certain features of the Dialogue Canada materials: the dialogues are too lengthy, have too many characters, lack verisimilitude and the pictures do not always correlate with the dialogue, thereby resulting in incorrect interpretation of the dialogue studied.[17]

Testing and evaluation in the language training program also came under scrutiny. Testing was found to be inadequate, the link between testing and language courses being barely definable. Neither is there any systematic evaluation of all the major components of the Language Bureau's language program. As with many nationally administered tests, the language trainee is provided with no useful information regarding his errors.

The unanimous opinion of the Bibeau Report was that there are no miracle courses and no miracle workers. As we all know, learning a language is a long process. In short, the feasibility of training monolingual adults to become bilingual is seriously questioned. Furthermore, in light of the worsening economic situation in Canada, an excessive amount of money is being spent in order to bilingualize the Public Service. It is widely felt that this money could be better spent aiding French-language education in primary and secondary schools.[18]

Credit must certainly be given to the federal government of Canada for its courage in promoting bilingualism. Yet too many factors only serve to polarize the two language groups. For example, Quebec in the spring of 1974 passed Bill 22 to establish the primacy of French as the language of education and work in the province. According to this Bill, the language of instruction shall be French, but school boards may also provide instruction in English. It specified that children should have a sufficient knowledge of the language of instruction. Failing a knowledge of either French or English, children would automatically be sent to French schools. Reaction to Bill 22 was so strong that the English-speaking minority and the French separatists of Quebec found themselves allied against it.[19] To Westerners, Bill 22 only showed the unwillingness of Quebec to cooperate in the venture of bilingualism. In spite of the federal government's bilingual program, the people of Quebec, outnumbered by millions of Anglophones, continue to fear losing their French culture and heritage.

To make matters worse, the new government of Quebec has passed Bill 101 which states that all children should attend French schools except those who had one parent educated in English schools in Quebec. Furthermore, immigrant children are to attend French schools; this includes children of anyone in Canada moving to Quebec from any other province.

Unfortunately, the language issue has become highly politicized. As recently as October 1977, the former Minister of Defence, James Richardson, said that Quebec should be the only bilingual province. In the same newspaper, next to Richardson's comments, was another article mentioning that the federal government had committed itself to providing financial support to English-Quebecers in what they believe

is a struggle against assimilation into French-Canadian culture. Secretary of State John Roberts announced in the Commons that "the federal government, just as it is concerned with the threat of assimilation of Francophones outside Quebec, is concerned over the sense of insecurity felt by Anglophones inside Quebec."[20]

I strongly believe that bilingualism in itself will not achieve Canadian unity, a subject which is of vital interest to Canadians today. Only when mutual understanding, respect, and a change of attitudes are achieved between the two language groups, will true national unity be possible. This goal would almost certainly place a heavier burden on Anglophones; they would have to understand and change their attitudes toward the Francophones who for so many years have been treated as second-class citizens in their own province.

## Notes

[1]Gilles Bibeau, Language Training Programmes of the Public Service of Canada (Ottawa, 1976), I, 41.

[2]Richard J. Joy, Languages in Conflict (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1972), p. 9.

[3]Ibid., p. 1.

[4]Ibid., p. 54. Quebec's birth rate for the period ending September 30, 1967 was 17.9 births for every 1000 persons, a drop from the 28.5 reported in 1959 and from the 31.1 peak reached in 1947.

[5]Paul Cappon, Conflit entre les Néo-Canadiens et les francophones de Montréal, Centre International de Recherche sur le Bilinguisme (Québec: Les Presses de L'Université Laval, 1974).

[6]Edward M. Corbett, Quebec Confronts Canada (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1967), p. 87.

[7]Ibid., p. 1.

[8]Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Ottawa, February 1, 1965, pp. 37-39.

[9]Bibeau, I. 59.

[10]Ibid., II, 52.

[11]Leon Dion, Quebec, The Unfinished Revolution (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976), p. 47.

[12]Bibeau, II, 44-45. Other levels are listed as follows:
03--Simple interconnected sentences; vocabulary limited to common usage and nontechnical terms;
02--Expressing opinions and ideas and commenting on activities using nontechnical terms; mastery and richness of vocabulary are adequate to sustain a spontaneous prolonged discussion;
01--Ability to express oneself in various types of interconnected phrases, prepare reports, reply spontaneously with normal rate of delivery.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid., I, 147.

[15]Ibid., II, 90.

[16]Ibid., V, 79.

[17]Ibid., V, 78.

[18]Ibid., III, 39.

[19]Time, June 3, 1974, pp. 6-7.

[20]Victoria Times, October 8, 1977, p. 28.

# ". . . TO EDUCATE THE MULTI-FACETED AND HARMONIOUSLY DEVELOPED SOCIALIST PERSONALITY . . .": THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

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Every East German publication discussing the educational system of the GDR is careful to claim a dialectic basis: Since a revolution of the proletariat, achieved with the help of the Soviet "Brudervolk," swept out the former ruling classes and installed a new egalitarian society of workers and farmers, "governing collectively under the guidance of the mother of the masses" (W. Ulbricht), the citizens of such a state have to have the knowledge to make sensible, democratic decisions collectively. Prof. Helmut Klein writes in the official publication, Volksbildung im sozialistischen Staat:

> A socialist democracy does not limit its citizens to a mere expression of opinion at the ballot box, but expects them to make daily contributions in the decision-making process in the running of the country . . . The basic tenets of socialist education extend (consequently) far beyond mere schooling and vocational training to continued study and furthering of knowledge. No other educational concept is able to guarantee that every citizen will successfully master every new demand thrust upon him by future developments in science, technology, production, and culture . . . .[1]

The first paragraph of the 1965 law takes this thought one step further by claiming that the didactic intent of the education act of 1946 is already fulfilled, and that the Socialist state has already been achieved: "The ultimate goal of the uniform socialist system of education is the achievement of a high level of knowledge by all the people, the formation and furtherance of the multi-faceted and harmoniously developed socialist personality which in turn will mold the social fabric in a rational fashion, change nature and lead a satisfying, happy, decent life. . . ."[2]

Disregarding disputable historical facts and rhetorical flourishes, the realities of political decision making in the GDR alone hardly justify a thorough educational process preparing the citizen for his "duty of collective co-determination." Basic policy is usually formulated in the Central Committee of the Plenum of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), and possibly debated at the SED convention (usually culminating in a resolution). The resolution can then become law by decree of the Council of Ministers, or be released to public discussion. The latter process is usually exercised before a 5-year National Economic Plan is ratified; the last exercise of co-determination brought more than 3,000 suggestions for changes from the public, 48 of which were incorporated in the final draft, none of which affected the basic thrust of the document finally enacted into law. Beyond physical presence at these public discussions, no significant contribution to the decision-making process seems consequently to be expected of the GDR citizen. Judged by the realities of political life in the GDR, the aforementioned lofty goal of "education for participation" turns out to be little more than a sham!

The "breaking of the educational monopoly of the ruling classes" (Honecker) has had a major impact on the admission policies of schools and universities in the GDR. Children of workers and farmers have received--and still receive--preferential admission. However, these selective admission policies reflect time and again the anti-intellectual bias of the SED-Kader by relegating children of doctors and academics to eight-year schools (thereby keeping them effectively from following in their parents' footsteps), though their parents themselves may have humble origins. Considering the increasing number of graduated economists, agronomists, engineers, bureaucrats, functionaries, a.o. unable to prove recent physical labor, it has become fashionable to chart carefully the family working-class background several generations back.

By laying aside criticism of the excesses of the educational system for the moment, on the basis of previously outlined tenets, the GDR has evolved a system of schooling, allowing constant (state) supervision of a child while the parents pursue a career. Day nurseries (Kinderkrippen) concentrate on developing the child's motor coordination, speech, and play habits. All activities are constantly supervised by a parent-"aktiv" (Elternaktiv), in conjunction with the consulting physician and the principal.

Kindergartens, which accept children above three years of age, are supervised by similar committees. There is an increasing emphasis on collective play: ". . . the human personality can develop fully only in the collective and will develop its full individual potential only there--a tenet of socialist pedagogical theory, proven a thousandfold in real life. . .,"[3] as well as activities for older children to ease their transition to grade school, such as "self-service" at lunch, regular performance of useful chores, and musical as well as athletic activities. While day nurseries are maintained by virtually all factories, farms, offices, and universities, the number of kindergartens is still insufficient to accommodate all applicants. As a result, special preparatory "afternoons of games and learning" are held once a week at various grade schools one year before a child is slated to start school.

Use of the term "grade school" for the subsequent school system is actually misleading, since kindergarten is followed by a "Comprehensive Polytechnical Secondary School" (CPS). In contrast to the old Volksschule the CPS attempts to be a true secondary school by providing the student with a broad basic academic background and the added feature of polytechnical instruction. A number of variations of this "unified" school system exist across the GDR: particularly in rural areas, between 10 and 15% of all

students still leave school after the eighth grade and enter vocational training. Another 10 or 15% have to switch to instructional facilities farther from home, since not all secondary schools are yet prepared to offer 10 or more years of instruction.

Moreover, a preliminary selection is made at the end of the eighth grade, when students may express a desire to go on to the "Extended Secondary School" (ESS) for another four years. Subject to the parents' approval, principals submit the names of their best pupils to the district superintendent as suitable candidates for so-called "preparatory classes." Both "preparatory classes" and special "advanced classes" taught at regular CPS facilities for gifted students demand more of the pupil, and better results are expected of these selected candidates. All East German publications on the ESS stress, however, that curriculum, time-table, and examinations at the end of the 10th year of schooling are uniform throughout the entire secondary school system, though "preparatory classes" are not held in CPS, but rather in ESS facilities and instruction is provided by ESS teachers. Stung by Western comments that special and preparatory classes leading to an "Extended Secondary School" were nothing but the return of the much-maligned Gymnasium in a different guise, GDR Minister of Education Margot Honecker emphasized recently that all GDR school-leave-certificates are equal and "no special privileges are earned by attending preparatory or advanced classes."[4]

Admission to the 11th grade of the "Extended Secondary School" (leading to the Abitur and university entrance qualifications) is granted to candidates having attained outstanding results in the 10-year CPS (an important factor for the so-called "late developers"), as well as excellent pupils from "preparatory classes," by a commission consisting of the school superintendent, the director of the ESS concerned, parents, and the representatives of the trade union and the socialist youth organization. These committees as a rule exhibit considerable ideological bias: "To expect a committed attitude to building up a socialist society, and in this case the students are usually members of the socialist youth organization. . . ."[5] As a result more than two thirds of the ESS students come from working class or farming families (see page 2) and more than 50% are women.

There can be little doubt that many students, particularly boys from rural backgrounds, prefer an alternative way leading to college or university as well, known as "Apprenticeship with Abitur." They enter, after completion of the regular CPS, a vocational institute—by far less competitive than the ESS—offering Abitur preparation courses in addition to a "Skilled Worker's Certificate." Neither course of study guarantees admission to the college or university field of the student's choice, since the "GDR provides training facilities for only as many people as can be guaranteed a place of work."[6] Because of the popularity of certain trade school, college, or university courses, certain extraneous criteria have long been introduced into this selection process, such as Gesellschaftsbewusstsein (as reflected by a student's membership in the socialist youth organizations, political activism, and good performance in the central competitions held under FDJ auspices in several subjects throughout the nation annually), Klassenzugehörigkeit (as before, preference is given to the students of working-class background), and Veranlagung (having displayed intellectual prowess in ESS or Spezialklassen for gifted students may originally have indeed been designed to stimulate special interests and talents without preferring the student to his regular CPS counterpart, but in several sports, certain cultural fields, and certain science subjects Spezialklassen have become a device to select special talent; students in these programs are pretty well assured of their special status, as long as they can maintain their superior performance level.

Considering the special emphasis given to the polytechnical experience for grades 7 through 10 within the East German secondary schools, it certainly merits a closer look. Dr. Peter Fiedler, Deputy Minister of Higher and Vocational Education, recently devoted an entire news conference to explain that the polytechnical experience ("UTP--Unterrichtstag in der sozialistischen Produktion") prepares the adolescent for his encounter with the world of labor and production and ". . . gets the student disposed towards the constantly expanding requirements of the labor market."[7]

Western charges that the polytechnical experience is simply "busy work to take up slack in the classroom created by a teacher shortage" (Strauss), or a fancy name for "a kind of field trip to farm or factory" (Brandt), or intended to supply cheap unskilled labor to overcome labor shortages (Adenauer), only serve to betray the Western ignorance of the difference between the temporary voluntary pledging (freiwillige Selbstverpflichtung), or emergency labor service (Arbeitseinsatz), and the year-round polytechnical experience. Yet there can be little doubt that an industrial brigade, working on a quota system, has neither the time to initiate beginners (as a rule, assembly lines have to be slowed by 70 or 80%, if the beginner is to keep up at all), nor the will to vacate machinery to idle away valuable production time (nor the generally unavailable spare parts to put an abused and damaged machine back into production). As a result, the polytechnical student may end up drilling "precision" holes into steel plates, like the young Edgar Wibeau in Plenzdorf's Die Neuen Leiden des jungen W. To avoid such frustrating experiences, several large factories have handed over an entire assembly line to be run solely by students. The management of the Washing Appliances Plant Schwarzenberg, where the polytechnical student is taught everything from running to servicing machinery, and from the assembly of complete appliances to accounting procedures, claims that "given the responsibility of functioning as part of the whole, of contributing to the assembly of a marketable product" will provide the student not only with increased know-how but also a sense of accomplishment and pride in the collective effort. But whatever the arrangement, one discouraging fact remains: every factory not only has a planned production quota to meet, but also a planned waste or scrap "output," usually a percentage of the total production quota--which in turn

may again be needed as a source of raw materials for some other factory. In the final analysis, even the socialist worker is only human and a tightly knit brigade may think just highly enough of the quality of its workmanship to keep its own production from the scrap pile. On occasion, that leaves the polytechnical student as producer of the required scrap quota--a useful function within the National Economic Plan, but it is not very likely to be an experience to stir the student's enthusiasm for technology and production.

Of all "Unterrichtstage in der sozialistischen Produktion," the UTPs taught by cooperative and collective farms allow the student the most latitude in choosing, planning, and executing his own project. From seeding to harvest, from breeding to the care of the young animals, the size of the project usually necessitates strenuous physical labor from every pupil in the UTP-group; but a little extra effort from the individual can produce measurably increased yields. Be it the pride in one's own achievement, or the urge of the urban dweller to return to the soil, rural UTPs have consistently been more popular with students than those in factories.[8] Problems arise most often from personality conflicts between urban dweller and rural youth; local shortages of consumer goods--not to mention girls--being the most frequent causes, are best described in Wolf Biermann's poem "Erster Mai": ". . . der Konsum bestellt Bockwurst / und hundert Kasten Bier / Studenten sind auch hier / die kommen aus der Stadt / (wo man sowas hat) . . . ."[9] One may also want to speculate if and to what extent the inequality in privilege, 8th grade vs. ESS or university education, contributes to these occasional rumblings.

All official evaluation of program and instruction is delegated to parent-"Aktivs" (Elternaktive), the "friendship councils" (Freundschaftsrat) of the pioneer organization "Ernst Thälmann," and between age 14 and 25, the school or university-"Aktivs" of the Free German Youth (FDJ) organization. The FDJ has its own parliamentary representation (in every "Rat des Kreises," as well as in the "Volkskammer"). Both Prof. Klein and Kohn/Postler take care to emphasize that the cooperation between schools and socialist youth organizations is meant to aid in the administration of instruction and strengthen the educator's authority. Since the great majority of students holds a membership in a socialist youth organization, most pupils are under constant, close scrutiny of the "Committee on Youth" (Jugendausschuss) of the "Volkskammer," of the Minister of Higher and Vocational Education, Margot Honecker, and her husband, former FDJ-boss and present First Secretary of the ZK of the SED, Erich Honecker.

If a student passes all previously mentioned selections, graduates with excellent grades as well as the appropriate leave certificate, and holds membership in a socialist youth organization, he may be granted admission to a university or college "under consideration of the social structure of the population and the training capacities as marked out in the National Economic Plan."[10] Once admitted, the student receives all the favored treatment the socialist state can bestow upon its future elite. Since the number of students in a given subject area corresponds to the provisions and requirements of the National Economic Plan, he is freed from worry about his future: "At least twelve months before finishing their studies students know which work they will do later. Agreements to this effect are signed between the factories or other institutions and students before these have completed their studies."[11] In addition, the student receives a study grant of about 200 DM and may receive another 80 to 100 DM a month as supplementary grant for good academic work. 10 DM monthly room rent in a dormitory, 60 Pf. to 1 DM per meal in a cafeteria, a 75% reduction in transportation fares, and a 50% discount on all other charges, help to stretch the grant income. Working mothers receive additional grants-in-aid, may take their curriculum of study by correspondence, by direct study, evening courses, or a mixture of all of the above. In return, the Jugendgesetz of January 28, 1974 (in paragraph 22) expects leadership and loyalty in return for the privilege of higher education: ". . . to study at a university, college or trade school is a high social (gesellschaftliche) recognition and for each student a personal obligation to the working class and the socialist state!"[12]

Looking at the development of the East German educational system since its inception on May 1, 1946, one cannot be but impressed with the high level of proficiency displayed by its graduates and the quality of today's instruction. Nevertheless, as consistently shown throughout this study, the system has been--and still is--suffering from confusion and a disparity between idea and execution.

This disparity began to show already in 1945, when all school systems were made responsible to a central education authority, all religious or private schools closed, all printed or recorded materials purged, and all teachers replaced across the board. The immediate results were less than spectacular: the instructor's pedagogical preparation was often scanty and proved inadequate in the crowded classroom; facilities, books, and teaching aids were generally unavailable, and the decrees of the local Soviet occupation authorities seemed more often than not issued at cross purposes with the directives of the central German education authorities. To prevent the total breakdown of the noble experiment, bourgeois "anti-fascists," who had joined the "Nationalkomittee Freies Deutschland," and other teachers, who had "maintained their humanist bearing," were rehired to fill more than 40,000 open positions. The same dialectic rationale was then applied to the hiring of administrators and screening of instructional supplies.

It is quite unlikely that Bertolt Brecht was aware of this ideological pragmatism, when he celebrated the birth of the "first socialist state on German soil" in 1949 in his poem "When Our Cities lay in Ruins": ". . . then for those children of ours we made room / in the schools and cleaned the schools / and cleansed their knowledge of the centuries / of old dirt, to make it fit for children."[13]

The rehiring of these ideologically unacceptable individuals under a thin dialectic guise was undoubtedly thought of as a temporary measure to be rectified by the passing of time--as indeed it was. But it proved to be only the first obvious intellectual dishonesty among several:

An equal opportunity to a "quality eight-grade education" was to be guaranteed every pupil by the "Equality of Educational Opportunities Act" of 1946. But during the late forties and fifties the inadequately funded and staffed East German school system was unable to live up to the letter of the law: Rural one-room-schools, and afternoon, even evening instruction (Schichtunterricht) were still very much in evidence throughout the GDR by the late fifties. A tacit admission of the inequality of education provided were the so-called "worker's and farmer's colleges" (Arbeiter- und Bauern-Fakultäten) at all universities; admission to these was not contingent on school performance or proficiency, but rather based on one's proletarian standing (Parteilichkeit).

When in 1958 polytechnical education (as well as a "year in production" after high school) became obligatory for all high school students in the GDR, the abrupt, ill-prepared introduction of the polytechnical experience was brought on by the wishful ideological thinking of the "Bitterfeld Conference" of the same year ("Work is art and only in work man finds himself"). These pseudo-religious undertones were not lost on educators or students: a secondary school sponsoring a youth project of some kind (Jugendobjekt) could expect praise and readily available support funds; a student displaying eagerness and delight--though not necessarily aptitude--in his polytechnical experience has been--and still is--able to go far in school and beyond.

Through the years then, ideological pragmatism and intellectual dishonesty from above have led to political opportunism (Strebertum), and a mild case of "split-personality" among the young. The cheating on applications, for example creating a fictitious family working-class background, or making up work experiences and volunteer work (freiwillige Selbstverpflichtungen) has reached epidemic proportions and caused Walter Ulbricht to thunder in one of his last speeches that "many a curriculum vitae in our republic is entirely or in part fictitious and many officials accepting them are cynically aware of these shortcomings."[14]

Spying, cheating, and lying are normal among opportunists everywhere; unique to the "formed socialist personality" in the GDR is, however, the split between one's private behaviour and one's public actions. The educational system seems to be a major contributory cause of this national malady: membership in the socialist youth organizations gives the pupil a power position to be used against teachers and administrators. To be selected for special classes, particularly in sports, signifies that one is on the way to fame and fortune and improves grades in all other subject areas as well. Membership in a "activ" (Aktiv) levels the road to later party membership and leadership positions. "Voluntary" pledges (Freiwillige Selbstverpflichtungen) are signed by all students as a matter of routine, since omitting one's signature can have unspecified negative repercussions. But the veritable flood of such pledges--be it to limit smoking, drinking, West-contacts, listening to rock, jazz, or AFN--has made them well nigh meaningless. Their effect on the East German youth culture has been negligible, as shown by recent acts of hooliganism in Leipzig and Berlin--to be exact: fighting and rioting, after rock concerts were broken up by the VOPO. Unless arrested for such acts of hooliganism, a student caught breaking his pledge has to submit to the usual routine of criticism and self-criticism--often doing so with less true feeling than displayed in many a Western confessional.

One can only wonder if Prof. Klein thought of these ramifications of 30 years of socialist education in the GDR--or is even aware of them--when he talked about "learning collective responsibility" and "regard for the rights of others."

## Notes

[1](Berlin-East, 1976), p. 13. [2]Klein, p. 62.

[3]Ortrun Fischer, "Day Care in the Socialist Society," DDR-Review (Feb. 1974), p. 42.

[4]Margot Honecker, "The Extended Secondary School," TV Interview with the Fernsehfunk, July 1976.

[5]Heinz Schirrholz, "Paths to Higher Education," DDR-Review (May 1974), p. 10.

[6]Schirrholz, p. 9.

[7]Fred Kohn/Erwin Postler, in Chapter IV, "The Unified System," Polytechnical Education in the German Democratic Republic (Berlin-East, 1969), p. 18.

[8]Kohn/Postler, p. 18. [9]Gruppe 47 (Waltham: Blaisdell, 1969), p. 159.

[10]Schirrholz, p. 11 ff.

[11]Peter Fiedler, Interview, Berlin (GDR), August 1976 (tape).

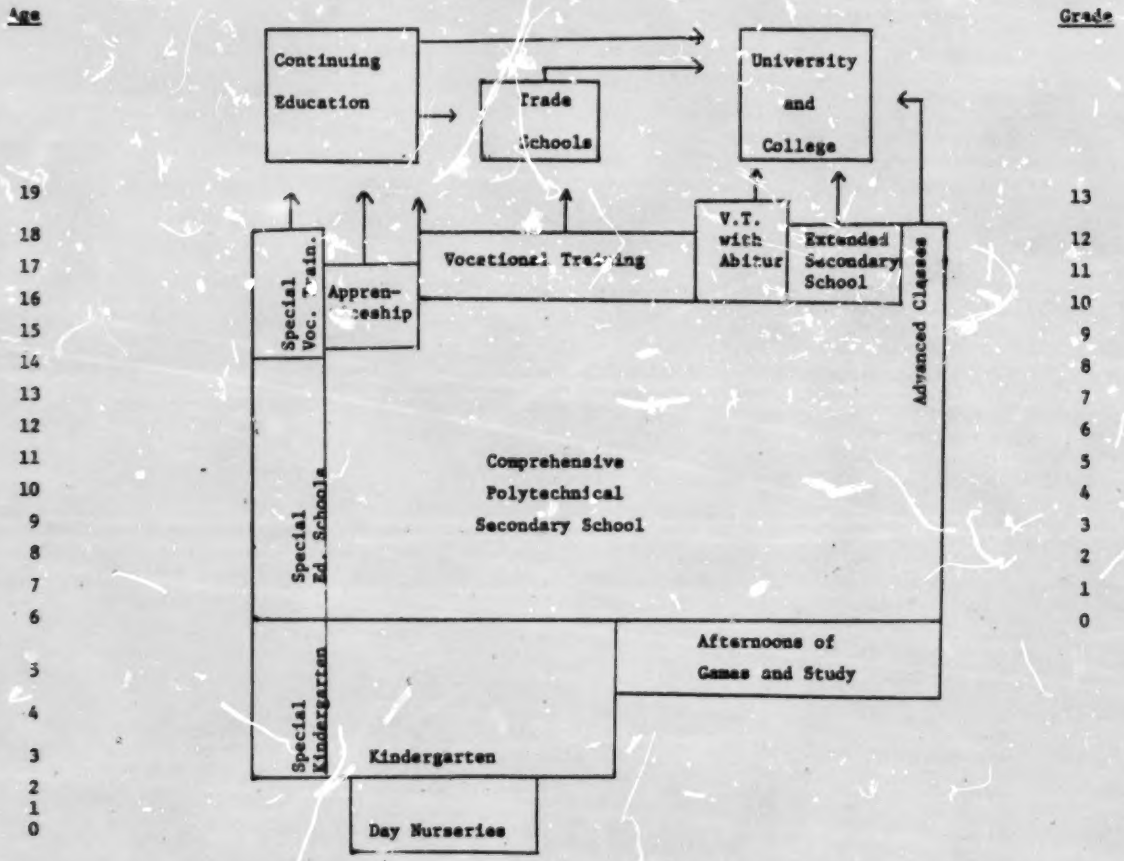
[12]Klein, p. 65.

[13]East German Poetry, ed. Michael Hamburger (Cambridge University Press, 1975).

[14]Address to the 15th Plenum of the Central Committee of the SED, January 18, 1971.

## Appendix

### THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC



# ORTHOGRAPHIC STRATEGIES OF A SELECTED SAMPLE OF STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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Little current research has investigated the problems adult non-native speakers experience in the acquisition of English-language spelling strategies. To elicit areas of spelling difficulty encountered by second language learners, an experimental spelling test, incorporating a range of potentially troublesome segments, was given to 102 adult students enrolled in English as a Second Language classes in Victoria, British Columbia. The results of this experiment are analyzed in the light of current psycholinguistic considerations as well as pedagogical practice to determine which conclusions, if any, can be drawn about the second language learner's knowledge of the rules governing English spelling. Strategies for preparing useful teaching materials are considered with reference to the spelling abilities of non-native students as determined by their performance on the spelling test.

Because English spelling has traditionally been thought of as both irregular and difficult, very little has been done to approach systematically the problem of spelling instruction, especially where second language learners are concerned. Whereas the English-speaking student may well accept the difficulties associated with spelling as a necessary chore that requires memorization, for the non-English speaking student the task is often approached with bewilderment which is far from allayed by his teacher, fellow students, or English-speaking contacts. Apart from traditional rules like "i before e except after c," the regular patterns of the spelling system have been neglected as pedagogical tools in the acquisition of English as a second language and are too infrequently made part of the English student's conscious knowledge. The student is seldom overtly aided in overcoming spelling difficulties by the application of the distributional rules of English grapheme-phoneme relationships because, in general, instructors themselves rarely pay attention to them and few textbooks take advantage of them.

One example of the regularity that applied linguistics tools might make more use of in teaching spelling and reading strategies to non-native speakers of English is to be found in the work of Hanna, Hanna, Hodges, and Rudorf (1966). Their computer analysis of phoneme and grapheme positioning in English syllables demonstrates that "nineteen [out of thirty] consonant phonemes attain the 80-percent criterion when positional factors are not considered. But when distributions of graphemic options in initial and final positions in syllables are tabulated, 21 of the 30 consonant phonemes exceed the 80-percent criterion /CH/, /J/, /NG/, /S/, /SH/, /Y/, /Z/, and /ZH/" (p. 81). These researchers exclude from their study that "the important generalization to be made from these data is this: When the phonological structure underlying the orthography is analyzed sequentially from simple phoneme-grapheme correspondences, through phoneme position in stressed and unstressed syllables, a hierarchical relationship is observed for both the phonological structure and the orthography" (p. 96).

Writers of spelling texts and teachers of spelling skills might be well-advised to use this distributional regularity as a starting point for spelling instruction in order to give students a firm foundation in phoneme-grapheme relationships along with their distributional possibilities. Though the focus here is on the non-native learner of English, the implications for young children or illiterate adults learning to spell and read their language is obvious.

More recently, a rather different approach from the phonological tradition has been suggested from the merger of distinctive feature phonology with generative-transformational grammar. Distinctive feature phonology posits a set of binary oppositions, universal in their potential application, and an integral part of Noam Chomsky's holistic theory of the nature of language. The merger of this particular phonological tradition with the essentially deductive, rationalistic logico-grammatical formalism of generative grammar has meant that abstract "underlying" forms are often posited for phonological shapes as well as for grammatical shapes. Speakers of a language are to be credited with knowledge of more than just that which appears in the surface structure.

Kess (1976) has drawn attention to the fact that this recent linguistic tradition has lately found itself heavily drawn into matters of developmental psycholinguistic and first-language acquisition. Thus it is not surprising that a good deal of deductive generative commentary has recently been written on topics like orthographic matters and the teaching and acquisition of reading skills. For example, Carol Chomsky (1970) recommends that the role of underlying lexical relationships is important, perhaps crucial in the processing of both reading and spelling. This approach is seen as quite distinct from the alphabetic or phonemic approach to spelling and reading. Chomsky notes "that words whose spelling is phonetically accurate do not constitute a distinct and meaningful category in the language. They are not the only systematically spelled words in the language, as is often believed. All words whose conventional spelling is close to their abstract lexical spelling are spelled systematically, and this is the more meaningful category" (p. 298).

Words which undergo change in phonological shape due to such factors as stress or suffixation usually do not undergo graphological change; this allows the reader and the writer to identify immediately semantically meaningful ties. C. Chomsky and Read (1971) and Barganz (1974) have all stressed the overwhelming regularity of English spelling when it is approached in this fashion. These lexicals maintain that the traditional English system of abstract spelling retains similarities which are real in the language in the lexical spelling. Chomsky notes that lexical items nation and national are not different

words in the same sense that nation and notion are. Rather, they are different forms of the same word. This systematic retention of the base spelling offers the advantage of expressing underlying relationships in the language which are masked by surface phonetic features. Graphological features like silent letters--as in bomb and sign--are also used by the reader to identify the semantic message of the derived forms bombardier and signature, in which the abstract phonetic shape is actually manifested phonetically.

"What the foreigner lacks," observes C. Chomsky (1970:299), "is just what the child already possesses, a knowledge of the phonological rules of English that relate underlying representations to sound." Phoneme-related studies by Hanna, et al. (1966), Venezky (1970), and others have shown that there are predictable distributions for almost all graphemic options of English. N. Chomsky (1968, 1970), C. Chomsky (1970), and others of the generative school obviously believe that regular underlying lexical relationships are the essence of effective reading and spelling using the traditional English orthography, and that they should be so employed.

There are few, if any, applied linguistic approaches that capitalize on these two principles in English spelling. There is obviously a need for research into how the rules that govern the regularities of the English orthographic system are internalized by native speakers. Moreover, considering that the most difficult aspect of the acquisition process for non-native learners in the speaking-understanding and reading-writing-spelling skills is production, considerable attention should be paid to the problem of rule internalization in the preparation and utilization of appropriate applied linguistics materials for non-native speakers acquiring just these English skills.

Exactly which view of the spelling-reading processes--phoneme-grapheme relationships or underlying lexical representations--actually solves the greatest problems and thus affords the greatest potential as a pedagogical approach is perhaps best determined by a systematic examination of just which items are misspelled by non-native speakers at various levels of language acquisition. It would seem that one way of validating whether neophyte spellers encounter the difficulties suggested by these competing theories is to test their spelling expertise in just these areas.

It is also possible that the phonemic-graphemic rules of English spelling are eventually assimilated by students in an ad hoc manner, and the results of such assimilation vary in their suitability. The regularities of the underlying lexical system appear to be left to individual discovery and the results are not always satisfactory. Yet, the orthographic system is internalized with varying degrees of success, and possibly in some typical order. If in fact the rules are processed in some general order, the most effective and efficient teaching approach would be to utilize this fact by building on the students' competence in their new language. An analysis of the data in this study will reveal the strengths and weaknesses of students at different levels and thus the system that presently teaches them to spell.

One hundred two subjects were drawn from students attending the 1975-76 session of the English for New Canadians Programme at Camosun College, the Linguistics 099 courses at the University of Victoria, and the English 099 course at Camosun College. Thirteen subjects tested at the intermediate level, 48 subjects tested at the advanced I level, 12 subjects tested at the advanced II level, and 29 subjects were enrolled in the 099 programmes.

The subjects ranged in age from 17 to 70, in education in their own language from about third grade through university graduation. Sixteen language backgrounds were represented in the sample. Indeed, in all respects the subjects were a typical sample of adult second language learners to be found in similar classes anywhere in North America. In fact, the only feature that all subjects shared was that each was enrolled in an English language class to which he had been assigned on the basis of his performance on a standardized written examination.

A spelling test was devised to incorporate words representing a variety of spelling problems, for example, vowel spellings, silent letters, treatment of final consonants, the vowel shift rule, and so forth. The areas of difficulty to be considered were identified through the author's teaching experiences and by examining several frequently-used applied linguistic texts. A pilot spelling test was administered to spring term (1975) students enrolled in intermediate and advanced English language classes at Vancouver City College Special Programmes Division and students attending the English Language Institute during the 1975 Summer Session at the University of Victoria. Based upon these results the original test was revised, so that any word which was spelled correctly by the majority of the subjects was excluded.

It was felt that some observable pattern might emerge by comparing the actual spellings of each subject with the correct spellings of the experimental words, as well as by examining all of the incorrect spellings at each level within each language group represented. This pattern would be the key, presumably, to the types of spelling mistakes that are actually made by non-English speakers learning the language and classed at different ability levels. If, in fact, such a pattern were to emerge, error types might be predictable and specific solutions could be offered. Although programmed texts that attempt to utilize this problem-solution approach to learning do exist (see for example Smith, G.L., Spelling by Principles: Prentice-Hall, 1966), they are written for native speakers of the language and rely heavily on the student's ability to work by himself because he knows how each word should sound, where stress occurs, and so forth. To the non-native speaker, unfortunately, such texts are more often frustrating than helpful.

The subjects were first asked to answer a preliminary information questionnaire; instructions for filling in the actual data sheet were then administered and any questions answered. Subjects were requested to write the test words correctly, if the correct spelling was known; otherwise, each participant was encouraged to write the words as he thought they would be spelled in English. Each item to be tested was then read twice by the experimenter. A sentence in which the item appeared was read aloud and the individual item was repeated. The experiment took approximately one hour from start to finish. On completion, a dittoed sheet with all of the words spelled correctly was given to each participant and some explanation of the nature and object of the research was provided.

It became apparent that second language learners of English understand the notion of phoneme-to-grapheme relationships in English. The results of the experiment seem to lend strong support to the phonemic principle as a useful teaching tool. The students apparently possess a general idea of how to represent the sounds of the language even if they do not fully grasp the graphological distribution peculiar to English. Although the test words were frequently misspelled, the majority of subjects at all levels spelled the words either partially or completely according to potential phoneme-grapheme realtionships in the orthography.[1]

The percentage of errors of all types decreased as the measured level of language ability increased.[2] Generally, spelling proficiency increases with the amount of formal English study and the number of years that a subject has been exposed to an English-speaking environment. How language users, both native and non-native, actually do acquire a sense of orthographic acceptability through a teaching curriculum which typically views the spelling of each lexical item as a separate event and the spelling of the language as a whole as relatively unsystematic is an intriguing question. Perhaps the finding [Hanna, et al. (1966)] that 80% of the time English spelling adheres to the phonemic principle offers a partial answer. In addition, sufficient exposure obviously evolves its own strategies.

The results of the investigation indicate that what the second language learner needs in spelling instruction are specific rules and examples that will allow him to generalize correctly at an early time. Texts should attempt to compensate for the years during which the student was not exposed to the target language. Rules governing correct spelling strategies must be expressed in a manner that will allow the student to recall and to use the strategy, perhaps by making use of historic or phonetic factors or the fact of large-scale linguistic borrowing (as from Latin and French). Patterns and sub-patterns of regularity are valuable clues to the spelling of the language; they should be identified and used methodically to help the student in classifying and generalizing the spelling of English words.

To be effective, a spelling text for the adult language learner cannot, however, rely merely on the alphabetic principle or on the rules that govern the selection of letters to represent sounds. The adult learner also needs to acquire an understanding of the semantic relationships that hold between words in the language. This means that underlying lexical representations can be used to augment or explain many patterns. These patterns are potentially useful ones, though it is important to recognize that the spelling cues afforded by such patterns as the vowel shift or consonantal alternations are useless as self-teaching devices when students lack sufficient vocabulary to comprehend semantic relationships.

In conclusion, additional research into effective pedagogical approaches to spelling strategies for adults for whom English is not a native language is a necessity, since spelling research to date has almost totally neglected the special needs of the adult who is learning English. Pedagogical strategies will have to incorporate some elements of both phonetic and the lexicalist theories if they are to utilize fully the richness of regularity found within the language.

## Notes

[1]Each of the words in the test was selected because it represented a typical problem for individuals learning the language. The 84 words represented several important categories of potential linguistic problems, with some words typical of more than one problem area. The categories were generally as follows:

(1) The order of ei/ie in various environments. Usually ie as in believe, but ei/c _____ as in ceiling, or when the digraph represents /e/ as in weigh.

(2) The retention or deletion of the final silent e in derived forms: e → e/ _____ + consonant as in careful, e = ∅ _____ + vowel as in taking.

(3) The retention or respelling of the final y in derived forms: y → i/1 syllable: consonant _____ + es as in ladies and flies; y → y/2 syllables: consonant _____ + vowel as in studying; y → y/vowel _____ + s as in plays, trays.

(4) The doubling of final consonants in derived forms. A tense vowel followed by a consonant and a final, silent e drops the e before a suffix as in hoped; whereas a lax vowel followed by a consonant doubles the consonant before a suffix beginning in a vowel as in hopped and stopped (an exception to this rule is the word give).

(5) The softening of the g and c is indicated by a following e or i. [g/c] [e/i] - [/j/ /s/] as in garage, angel, tropical, concert, accident, metric, culture, and several other words. Many Germanic words are exceptions to this rule, for example, finger, singer, and give. Frolicking was included as an example in which the /k/ represented by the final c is retained in the spelling by the addition of k before a suffix beginning with e or i is added.

(6) The spelling of silent letters. This is often a problem of underlying lexical relationships or language or origin which must be realized by the speller. Words included in this sample are sign, signature, knee, although, psychic, night, knives, honor, thought, and scene.

(7) The spelling of regular and irregular plurals. It was assumed that the subjects would have little difficulty with the form of regular plurals; however, tomatoes, wives, knives, and flies were included to give some notion of how these irregularities might be written.

(8) The various spellings of /č/. Represented by chart, culture, watch, question, and factual.

(9) The various spellings of vowel phonemes. /e/ tame, train; /æ/ manage; /i/ eve, senior, peak, seek; /ai/ kite; /I/ written; /o/ bone, float, boulder; /oi/ loyal, toil; /ʌ/ smother, couple; /a/ bother, cough, thought; /aw/ douse; /u/ balloon, group; /ə/ learn, stir, germ, atmo(u)r, hono(u)r, liar.

(10) The spelling of /kʷ/. The words question and square.

(11) The spelling of lexically related word pairs whose consonantal quality changes phonetically but not orthographically: fact - factual.

(12) The spelling of stems and derived forms that (a) undergo the vowel shift alternations when spoken, but because of the underlying lexical relationship retain the vowel spelling of the underived form, or (b) because of subsequent spelling reform have actually changed the spelling of the vowel to represent more clearly the phonetic shape. Such word pairs were represented by provide-division, grateful-gratitude, various-variety, nation-national, custody-custodian, cone-conic, abound-abundant, courage-courageous, and meter-serenity. The lexical stem in some word pairs (provide-division) was changed in order to give subjects fewer cues as to the actual spellings.

[2]Summary of Second Language Learners' Orthographic Selection for Phonemes of English

| Group | Total No. of Attempts | % of Correct Word Spellings | % of Correct Problem Spelling |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Phoneme /j/ | | |
| 099 | 134 | 69 | 93 |
| Advanced II | 55 | 66 | 89 |
| Advanced I | 198 | 56 | 75 |
| Intermediate | 46 | 30 | 67 |
| | Phoneme /g/ | | |
| 099 | 56 | 77 | 82 |
| Advanced II | 24 | 67 | 75 |
| Advanced I | 86 | 76 | 79 |
| Intermediate | 20 | 40 | 50 |
| | Phoneme /s/ spelled c | | |
| 099 | 55 | 86 | 92 |
| Advanced II | 23 | 70 | 87 |
| Advanced I | 88 | 77 | 84 |
| Intermediate | 21 | 38 | 57 |
| | Phoneme /k/ spelled c | | |
| 099 | 136 | 74 | 90 |
| Advanced II | 57 | 56 | 81 |
| Advanced I | 211 | 53 | 64 |
| Intermediate | 51 | 22 | 61 |

# THE EFFECT OF FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING ON SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING: ANOTHER ARGUMENT FOR LANGUAGE STUDY IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

Peter A. Eddy and Elissa Natelson Allen

Teachers of language and other individuals who have learned more than one foreign language recognize generally that the second foreign language is easier to learn than the first. There appears to be a skill, or a set of skills acquired in the acquisition of a first foreign language which appears to make a second one easier to acquire. This is a phenomenon that we have felt ourselves or have seen in our students. But up to this point, experimental data to support our intuitions have been rare. This report will review several studies that have been done and will present some new data from two recent investigations conducted in government language schools.

The principal aim of the following discussion is to present empirical evidence to show that training in a language, any language, in a formal learning environment or outside, develops in human beings a language learning ability, or aptitude, which can be valuable when a person finds himself confronted with a new language to learn. The studies described below document the fact that individuals with prior language training learn new languages faster and better than those who do not have such language-learning experience in their backgrounds, other things being equal. This is important information for the language teacher, be he in primary, secondary, or post-secondary education. These data show clearly that language skill developed in any language is useful not only in and of itself, but also (and perhaps more importantly) that a student who develops skill in one language will have developed a talent attainable in no other way, and one which may be called upon at any time in later life. It would seem then that these data furnish a strong argument for the inclusion of language training in any educational program, whatever the level.

Dunkel, in his review of language transfer research during the early decades of this century, was able to conclude that "previous study of one foreign language for at least a year tends to produce better achievement in the second foreign language."[1] Carroll,[2] writing fifteen years later, noted that research results had to be considered inconclusive, since the studies to that time had not been controlled adequately for language aptitude. Carroll's skepticism stemmed from the fact that the data collected to that time had come from students who had elected to take a second foreign language; these are just those students who are likely to have proven successful in studying their first foreign language because of high language aptitude.

Milholland and Millman[3] reported on a 1956 experiment in which they analyzed the effect of previous study of a different foreign language on 879 University of Michigan freshman students of French, German, and Spanish. The data shown in Table 1, adapted from Milholland and Millman (p. 236), show that in every case but one, there was positive correlation between the students' grade and amount of prior language learning experience (Table 1). The authors reported an interesting secondary observation which supported conclusions arrived at by Skelton in 1957:[4] high school foreign language study also correlated well with overall college achievement.

Milholland and Millman realized that two factors might be skewing their results. First, it could be that high school language courses were effectively screening out learners with low language aptitude. And second, perhaps only the more academically talented students elected to take a language in high school, in which case this more talented group would naturally perform better in college. The experimenters performed multiple regression analyses to account for these factors, and established sub-groups of high school language and non-high school language students who had comparable L scores on the American Council on Education Psychological Examination. They were able to report that "students with no high school foreign language do not, on the average, earn as good grades in a new college foreign language as students with two years of high school foreign language having comparable ACE-L scores and grades in non-language courses" (pp. 327-28). Although transfer of learning was much more clearly demonstrated between the two Romance languages, there was some evidence that transfer exists between German and Romance languages.

A more recent study by Jacobsen and Imhoof[5] involved the analysis of 600 questionnaires filled out by American missionaries operating in a Japanese-speaking environment. The experimenters' purpose was to distinguish between highly successful and less successful adult learners of Japanese according to background, situational, procedural, psycholinguistic, and psychological factors. Jacobsen and Imhoof did not attempt to measure the effect which formal academic training in other languages might have had on the learning of Japanese. They were interested in testing the truth of Penfield's and Lenneberg's[7] assertions that children under age 12 were capable of developing a "switch mechanism" which permits them to "turn from one language to another without confusion, translation or accent" (p. 330). The experimenters observed that "a progression exists from lower speaking proficiency scores to higher speaking proficiency scores as increments in degree of multilinguality during childhood were added. The data seem to confirm that early exposure to a bilingual situation leaves a child with a facility for language acquisition that remains throughout life" (p. 334). It should be noted that although multilinguality during childhood was determined to be an important predictor of success in this study, it ranked only seventh in a list of thirteen predictors included. However, "developed aptitude" for language learning ranked third in order of importance, and prior language training may have influenced this aptitude; Jacobsen and Imhoof do not discuss this point in their report.

Although language aptitude has been fairly extensively studied over the past twenty years,[8] little has been reported on the effect of language learning on language aptitude as measured by existing aptitude tests.[9] An exception to this appears in a study done by Politzer and Weiss[10] in which the primary purpose was "to determine whether foreign language aptitude as measured by standard foreign language aptitude tests (Pimsleur LAB, Carroll-Sapon MLAT) could be significantly increased by specific training and whether increases in language aptitude brought about by such training resulted in better achievement in foreign language training" (p. xiii).

The experiment involved two groups of subjects: language students at the Defense Language Institute and students attending high school classes in the San Francisco Bay area. In both cases, subjects were split into experimental groups, which received training in exercises similar to those found in MLAT in addition to their regular language classes, and control groups, which received only their regular language instruction. All subjects were tested before and after the experimental treatment to find if there were measurable differences in their language proficiency and their language aptitude scores.

Experiment results "gave no clear indication that combined aptitude training and language study is superior to language study alone in increasing either aptitude or achievement in foreign language" (p. 64). Elsewhere, Politzer and Weiss state that there "seems to be some evidence that the first year of audio-lingual training in high school may by itself constitute some aptitude training" (p. 24). The experimenters also cite a report by Sturgis[11] which concludes that there may be a ceiling to aptitude increases due to prior foreign language learning experience, at least with regard to "certain African languages" (pp. 24, 65).

The studies cited above provide firm evidence which confirms the existence of transfer of training in learning a second foreign language. In addition, some evidence has been forthcoming to allay Carroll's reservations (see note 2) about the lack of control for the language aptitude variable: Milholland and Millman controlled for this in one of their analyses, and Politzer and Weiss (who established comparability in language aptitude for their experimental and control groups) concluded that foreign language instruction increased foreign language aptitude. In the discussion of Studies 1 and 2 below, we do not include data about the correlation between prior language training and MLAT score, since our primary intent here is simply to demonstrate the effect of prior foreign language training on current language study. Studies 1 and 2 did collect MLAT data, though, and in virtually every case, students with prior language training had significantly higher language aptitude as measured by the MLAT than those who had no prior training. One could perhaps argue that students who had elected to learn a first foreign language were likely to have superior language aptitude before starting the study of that language. In order to counter this argument, one would need a longitudinal study where language aptitude were measured before the study of the first foreign language.

The new data to be presented below come from two studies conducted by one of the authors (Allen). Study 1, a doctoral dissertation,[12] was done to isolate those factors which could accurately predict the exit proficiency of entering students in two government language schools: the School of Language Studies of the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) of the U.S. Department of State, and the Language Learning Center of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Study 2 analyzed factors involved in predicting success of students in the CIA Language Learning Center.[13]

In all cases for the results reported below, student proficiency is measured by the Oral Interview Test, which "probably provides the most valid measurement of general speaking proficiency currently available."[14] This test, as the name denotes, involves a structured conversation held between the examiners (usually two) and the individual whose competence is being tested; the interview usually takes about 15-20 minutes. For a more detailed description of the test and a description of its use, the reader is referred to the excellent volume appearing in note 14. The "grade" on the test is expressed as a number from 0 (no proficiency) to 5 ("native" proficiency); examiners may append a plus to the number assigned (e.g., 0+, 1+) to indicate an individual's ranking between levels. The names of these FSI levels are given here; for more complete descriptions, see title in note 14 (Figure 1).

In the tables appearing below, proficiency averages of students almost always appears as a decimal: this is due to averaging of individual's scores. For the purposes of this analysis a "plus" is represented by ".5;" the score 1+ was entered into the computer as 1.5, and for a 2+, 2.5 was entered, and so on.

In both studies, prior training in foreign language was measured by administering the Oral Interview Test before the student began language training in the government language school. "No prior training" means that the student scored "0" for the language in question. "Some prior training" means that a student had from "0+" (0.5) to "1+" (1.5) in the language in question. "Substantial prior training" means that a student had "1+" (1.5) or more in the language in question.

What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of data from these two studies? As one would expect, students with some prior training in the language to be studied attain better proficiency in a shorter amount of training time than those with no prior training. This was true across all languages; the individuals in Table 2 were students of any one of a large number of languages taught in the FSI and CIA language schools. The table shows that students with some prior experience in the language to be studied took on the average 113 hours less time in training than did those students with no prior language learning experience. This amounts to their spending 30 percent less time in training. In addition, they

attained proficiency levels almost one full point superior to their classmates with no prior training. This is particularly significant in view of the fact that as one goes up the FSI scale, larger amounts of time in training are needed to rise from one level to the next. The large standard deviations indicate that there were significant numbers of students above and below the mean in both groups, however.

A second conclusion one may draw from the data in Study 1 is that substantial training in a language different from the one to be studied can also lead to higher proficiency in the new language (see Table 3). As in Table 2, students were taking any one of a large number of languages at one of the schools, and the prior training was in any other language than the one the student was taking.

A curious result shown in Table 3 is that students with prior experience took substantially longer time in training than did those with no prior experience (129 hours average). But they also learned substantially more language: their final scores were more than one level higher than those of students with no prior language. And given the fact that it usually takes substantially longer to progress from 1.5 to 2.5 than from 0.0 to 1.5, this extra gain in such a relatively short period (about three weeks in an intensive course) is quite good. Once again, standard deviations are high, indicating a large spread of scores.

Results from Study 2 also demonstrate the effect of prior learning either of the same language studied or of a different one on student achievement. Students who entered training with almost no training in the language to be studied (0.5 maximum), and who had no prior training in any other language at a proficiency of 1.0 or more (Group A in Table 4), were compared to students who entered training with a 1.0 or more in the language to be studied, or who had a proficiency in another foreign language of 1.5 or more (Group B in Table 4). Table 4 indicates that students in Group B take about 8 percent less time

Table 4 indicates that students in Group B take about 8 percent less time to reach level 1 speaking proficiency as those in Group A, although the difference is not statistically significant. And the effect of prior training appears to become even more important at higher levels of achievement. In reaching speaking proficiency level 2, Group B takes about 17 percent less time than Group A.

The FSI School of Language Studies has grouped languages according to the amount of time needed to learn them, based upon past experience at FSI. The School does not claim to make judgments about the relative difficulty of these languages for speakers of English, though it admits that there is some correlation. Figure 2 shows the four "FSI Language Groups."

Some interesting comparisons were made in Study 1 which provide further evidence for the value of previous language study in shortening the amount of training needed to attain a given proficiency level in a "new foreign language. Before discussing these, however, we must present some background information concerning FSI Language Groups.

Past experience with large numbers of students at the FSI School of Language Studies has led to estimates of the amount of time in training which will be necessary for students of low, average, and superior language aptitude to achieve defined levels of proficiency. Table 5 lists the amounts of training needed for students of average language aptitude; it should be kept in mind that the instructional mode here is a small class with intensive instruction (30 hours per week). So for Group I languages (e.g., German or Spanish) one would expect a student with average language aptitude (as measured by the Modern Language Aptitude Test) to attain somewhat better than a "limited working proficiency" (a 2+ or 2.5) after 720 hours of instruction. For Group II languages (e.g., Modern Greek or Malay) one would expect a comparable level of proficiency after somewhat less than 1,320 hours (see Table 4 for a qualification). For Group III languages (e.g., Hebrew or Russian), a comparable level of proficiency would be attained by 1,320 hours of instruction. And for Group IV languages (e.g., Arabic or Japanese), the same level of proficiency would not come until after about 1,950 hours of instruction (see Table 4 for a qualification).

In Study 1 (Natelson, 1975), an analysis was done to determine what the effect on language currently studied was of substantial prior training in languages of FSI Groups I and III. The results are shown in Tables 6 and 7. Sample sizes for these analyses are small, so our conclusions should be considered tentative; however, some of the differences described below are so substantial that they must be taken seriously.

As we mentioned above (see Table 2), prior training in the language to be studied gives a student a demonstrable head start. Table 6 shows that Group I students with substantial prior experience were able to reach a speaking proficiency of 2.7 with 475 hours of training; this is approximately two-thirds the amount of time required for an average student to reach the 2.5 level for Group I languages overall (see Table 5). It should be noted also that the data do not reveal how many of the Group I students were studying the same Group I language in which they received their prior training.

Table 7 shows that Group III students with substantial prior experience attained a speaking proficiency of 2.33 after an average of 516.5 hours in training. This represents about 39 percent of the time taken by students of average language aptitude (1,320 hours) to achieve a speaking proficiency rating of 2.5. Again, the data do not reveal how many students' prior training was in a Group III language different from the one studied here.

What conclusions may be drawn about the value of prior language study from the new data presented here? It appears that students learn a language better (i.e. they attain a higher proficiency) and they learn faster than students with no prior language training. This is the case both when the prior language is the one currently studied and when the prior language is different from the one currently studied.

Where the language currently studied was the same as the prior language, students with some prior training attained a speaking score almost one full level higher than their non-prior classmates in 30 percent less time (Table 2). In another group where the prior language training was in a different language than the one currently studied, students with substantial prior training were able to reach a speaking proficiency of 2.7 in two-thirds the amount of time taken by students of average language learning ability (Tables 4, 5, and 6).

It must be remembered that the data discussed above come from government language schools, which differ substantially from the language learning environment found in secondary and post-secondary institutions. This difference in milieu should not cause us to reject the data as irrelevant, however. It is reasonable to assume that transfer of training occurs wherever a second (or third or fourth) foreign language is learned, and the experimental evidence which appears here can be useful to language professionals at all levels.

## Notes

[1]H. B. Dunkel, Second-language Learning (Boston: Ginn, 1948), p. 98.

[2]J. B. Carroll, "Research on Teaching Foreign Languages," in N. L. Gage, Handbook of Research on Teaching (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), p. 1090.

[3]J. E. Milholland and J. Millman, "The Value of High School Foreign Language for the Study of College Introductory Foreign Language," The Modern Language Journal, 47, 6 (October 1963), pp. 235-38.

[4]Robert B. Skelton, "High School Foreign Language Study and Freshman Performance," School and Society, Vol. 85, No. 2113 (June 1957), 203-05.

[5]Morris Jacobsen and Maurice Imhoof, "Predicting Success in Learning a Second Language," Modern Language Journal, Vol. 58, No. 7 (Nov. 1974), 329-36.

[6]Wilder Penfield, "The Uncommitted Cortex: The Child's Changing Brain," The Atlantic Monthly, 214:1 (1964), 77-81.

[7]Eric H. Lenneberg, Biological Foundations of Language (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1967).

[8]A good overview and bibliography of language aptitude research may be found in R. M. Valette, Directions in Foreign Language Testing (New York: MLA/ERIC Clearinghouse on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1970 [ED 034 460]).

[9]Most commonly used aptitude tests are: J. B. Carroll and S. Sapon, Modern Language Aptitude Test (The Psychological Corporation, 1958, 1959) and P. Pimsleur, Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (Harcourt Brace, 1966).

[10]R. L. Politzer and L. Weiss, Improving Achievement in Foreign Language (Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development, n.d.) [ED 046 261].

[11]T. G. Sturgis, "A Study of the Statistical Relationships between Certain Variables and Success in Learning Certain African Languages" [Available through ERIC: FL 008358].

[12]E. R. Natelson, "The Predictive Validity of Each of the Five Parts of the MLAT: The Effect of Previous Language Training on MLAT Scores; the Correlation of MLAT Scores and Achievement in Specific Language Groups," Georgetown U., 1975.

[13]E. R. Natelson and D. Allen, "Prediction of Success in French, Spanish, German, and Russian Foreign Language Learning--An Analysis of FY67-74 Data, n.d." (1976) [Available through ERIC: ED 134 026].

[14]R. Jones, "Testing Language Proficiency in the United States Government," in R. Jones and B. Spolsky, eds., Testing Language Proficiency (Arlington, VA: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975), p. 4.

TABLE 1.—Grade (A=4) Earned in Foreign Languages by Students Taking Each Language as a New Language

| College Language | | Number of Years of High School Language | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | None | One | Two | More than Two |
| French | # Students | 35 | 10 | 169 | 67 |
| | Grade | 1.86 | 1.80 | 2.11 | 2.57 |
| German | # Students | 33 | 18 | 170 | 70 |
| | Grade | 1.88 | 2.11 | 2.19 | 3.50 |
| Spanish | # Students | 29 | 22 | 135 | 62 |
| | Grade | 1.52 | 1.91 | 2.38 | 2.79 |

TABLE 2.—Some (N=303) Prior Training in the Language Studied vs. No Prior Language Training (N=516) from Study #1

| | Some Prior (1.5 mean entering score) | | No Prior | | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | p< |
| Hours in training for language studied | 276.6 | 283.8 | 390.0 | 316.5 | .01 |
| Exit proficiency for language studied | 2.33 | 0.8 | 1.5 | .9 | .01 |

TABLE 3.—Substantial (N=95) Prior Training in a Language Other Than the One Studied vs. No Prior Language Training (N=516) from Study #1

| | Substantial Prior (1.5 or more) | | No Prior | | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | |
| Hours in training | 519.0 | 389.0 | 390.0 | 316.5 | .01 |
| Exit proficiency | 2.55 | 0.74 | 1.5 | .9 | .01 |

TABLE 4.—Time Required to Achieve Speaking Proficiencies 1 and 2 for Two Groups of Students (Numbers in parenthesis indicate size of group)

| | Group A* | Group B** | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Time Required to Reach Speaking Proficiency 1 | 354.59 hrs. (162) | 324.36 hrs. (25) | NS |
| Time Required to Reach Speaking Proficiency 2 | 649.23 hrs. (197) | 537.19 hrs. (74) | .01 |

*Group A: Students entering training with 0.5 maximum speaking proficiency in language to be studied and no speaking proficiency in any other language at 1.0 or more.

**Group B: Students entering training with 1.0 or more in language to be studied or who had a proficiency in another language of 1.5 or more.

TABLE 5.—Average Time in Training Needed to Attain Speaking Proficiency Score of 2+ (2.5) for FSI Language Students of Average Language Aptitude*

| Group | Number of Hours |
|---|---|
| Group I | 720 hours |
| Group II | 1,320 hours[1] |
| Group III | 1,320 hours |
| Group IV | 1,950 hours[2] |

*From "Expected Levels of Absolute Speaking Proficiency in Languages Taught at the Foreign Service Institute," April 1973.

[1]Proficiency given as 2+/3; a true average number of hours would be less than 1,320 for 2+ only.

[2]An estimate done by interpolating between 1,320 hours taken to achieve level 2 and an average of 2,580 hours needed to achieve level 3.

TABLE 6.—Substantial Prior Training in a Group I Language Studying a Group I Language (N=38) vs. Substantial Prior Training in a Group I Language Studying a Group II, III, or IV Language (N=8)

| | Studying Group I (N=38) | | Studying Group II, III, IV (N=8) | | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | |
| Hours in training | 475.7 | 272.9 | 726 | 646.0 | Not signif. |
| Exit speaking proficiency | 2.7 | 0.9 | 2.6 | 1.0 | Not signif. |

TABLE 7.—Substantial Prior Training in a Group III Language Studying a Group III Language (N=6) vs. Substantial Prior Training in a Group III Language Studying a Group I, II, or IV Language (N=25)

| | Studying Group III (N=6) | | Studying Group I, II, IV (N=25) | | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. | |
| Hours in training | 516.3 | 459.8 | 470.8 | 309.8 | Not signif. |
| Exit speaking proficiency | 2.33 | 0.98 | 2.36 | 0.67 | Not signif. |

Figure 1.--FSI Absolute Proficiency Ratings

0 = No proficiency

1 = Elementary proficiency

2 = Limited working proficiency

3 = Minimal professional proficiency

4 = Full professional proficiency

5 = Native or bilingual proficiency

Figure 2.—FSI Language Groups*

| | |
|---|---|
| Group I | Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Haitian Creole, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish. |
| Group II | Bulgarian, Dari, Farsi, Greek, Hindi, Indonesian, Malay, Urdeo. |
| Group III | Amharic, Bengali, Burmese, Czech, Finnish, Hebrew, Hungarian, Khmer (Cambodian), Lao, Nepali, Pilipino, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Sinhala, Thai, Tamil, Turkish, Vietnamese. |
| Group IV | Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean. |

*From "Expected Levels of Absolute Speaking Proficiency in Languages Taught at the Foreign Service Institute," April 1973.

# A RATIONALE FOR VIDEODISC-ASSISTED FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Collectively disenchanted, foreign language teachers have become impervious to extravagant claims of the type once made by many early proponents of language laboratories and related instructional media. Now a new technology has appeared which ostensibly will transform everything. The imminent marketing of optical-type videodisc players (and possibly of other, competing systems)[1] will signal the beginning of revolutionary changes in the fields of mass communications, information storage and retrieval, merchandising, entertainment, recreation, etc. Will this revolutionary technology radically affect education? Some foreign language teachers are breathless with excitement over potential applications; some are cautious or skeptical. Others have not yet heard of videodiscs.

As language labs come on the scene, few teachers, in their haste to be modern and progressive, stopped to analyze the nature of the new equipment and the undigested procedures advanced for employing it, overlooking important implications for instruction. Many rushed, for example, to place students in booths, effectively isolating them visually, acoustically, and socially, without carefully considering the consequences. No one seemed to reflect that communication, verbal and non-verbal, is not only the most social of human activities but is ordinarily carried on in richly varied environments where all the senses are active. To avoid similar mistakes which might frustrate effective use of this extremely promising new medium, attempts should be made to formulate a comprehensive rationale for its potential role in foreign language education. The intent of this paper is to present a preliminary exposition of pertinent concepts as a possible point of departure.

In spite of their incredible complexity, human systems of verbal and non-verbal communication are readily mastered by children in early stages of their development within a given culture. No recourse to technical types of analysis or specialized instructional procedures is necessary. Additional communicative systems can be acquired by children in similar fashion through interaction with members of other cultures in shared or separate milieux. In institutional instructional environments attempts to substitute for such interaction, in such milieux, are made in a very limited way using the teacher, native informants, and media. In a natural milieu most learning is of the informal variety. In artificial instructional situations learning is almost exclusively formal and technical. The need to correct this, related to the tremendous potential videodisc technology has for mediating informal types of learning, will be discussed below.

As used here, references to informal, formal, and technical learning relate to concepts formulated by Edward T. Hall in The Silent Language.[2] Informal learning essentially is characterized by the imitation of models, often outside of awareness. Although the classroom can be the scene of more authentic modeling of non-abstract, non-simulated behavior than has been appreciated, possibilities are nonetheless rather restricted. In several classes, over a period of time, I have experimented with "la subcultura escolar"--the subculture of the classroom. On a trip to Panama and back in 1973 I visited numerous schools and consulted with many students and teachers to identify elements of this infra-society. Though already somewhat informed, since several of my children attended Chilean schools for four years, I was surprised at the wealth of material encountered. As in our culture, learners pass notes, draw pictures of teacher on the blackboard, make paper airplanes and sail them, etc., and do other "real" things in the "unreal" atmosphere of the classroom. At first my students simulated this authentic behavior, including pranks on the teacher, and then it became all too real. Far from finding this ironic, I was suffused with a glow of success and achievement, as long as a student had something real to say in Spanish when caught putting a tack on my chair.

Most teachers don't care for such authentic behavior, even though it has many life-enlivening applications in the world of work and other areas of society. "Real" classroom-related behavior, therefore, is out, in most cases, and quasi-real or simulated things must be done, with the hope that sometime, somewhere, real applications may be found beyond classroom walls. Play, or playful behavior, as I found with "subcultura escolar," is real enough, in almost any setting, and can involve stimulating activities that motivate learners. "El gato" (tick-tack-toe) can be played in Spanish and enjoyed equally well at school, at home, or wherever two speakers or learners of the language might get together. "El gato" is the real thing, or approximately so, even when not played in a Hispanic milieu. "A la mesa," a simulation I've devised reflecting Hispanic eating habits, can be practiced as a "dry run" and then for real, at the school cafeteria, a Hispanic restaurant, or the teacher's home. Simulations offer opportunities limited only by the imagination for a type of practice natural to the young, who delight in playing "house," "astronauts," or any other game that memory or fantasy might suggest. With a few props, and proper patterns to follow, children can immediately begin to approximate successfully any appropriate behavior drawn from the foreign culture.

Such informal learning is not so powerful in adults. Their mimetic ability, or talent for imitating, has been impaired through psychological as well as psysiological processes of maturation. Older learners can compensate for this to some extent through their ability to profit from judicious doses of analysis and explanation in apprehending the nature of selected behavior changes involved in learning a foreign language. Proper execution is difficult for them and few, if any, attain native fluency. This, however, does not prevent them from enjoying the great satisfactions and advantages to be found in the varying

degrees of functional bilingualism that they are able to attain. Informal and technical learning combined in effective ways can make foreign language learning a very profitable experience for them.

Formal learning, in Edward T. Hall's terms, functions to perpetuate or propagate selected behavior within a culture, characteristically by means of binary, overtly normative inputs (yes-no, good-bad, right-wrong, etc.). While the informal and technical are not lacking in complexities and potential for defective, adverse application, the formal component of learning is fraught with extraordinary difficulties at all levels. "Right," even when fairly appraised and ascribed, is loaded with complications. "Wrong" bristles with potent implications.

A proper strategy for language learning must attempt to achieve the optimum application and mix of informal, formal, and technical procedures in relation to such factors as the age of learners, the skills to be imparted (listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, cultural understanding, esthetic appreciation, linguistic description), the situation of the learner (with respect to aptitude, preparation, attitude, performance), and the circumstances under which learning may take place (structured, spontaneous, intramural, extramural, individual, group, media-assisted, unassisted). Instructional media employed should have features facilitating all three types of learning.

Early types of instructional media mingled the informal, formal, and technical rather indiscriminately in basically passive types of presentation. Devices for programmed learning, purportedly designed in many instances for active, informal acquisition of skills, tended to be binary in function, providing the yes-no, good-bad inputs characteristic of formal learning. Programs developed still place great emphasis on intraverbal behavior, eliciting paraphrastic responses that are "reinforced" on a right-wrong basis with little or no provision for analysis or explanation of rightness or wrongness—a function of technical learning. With no technical basis for learning provided and no unequivocal mimetic basis for informal learning (except a posteriori through "confirmation"), programmed learning usually has all the sophistication of a cattle prod. The programmed steps are often so minimal and unchallenging that students would prefer a good prod to the sensation of being beaten to death with candy wrappers from which all the reinforcing goodies have long since been dispensed.

With the development of language laboratories a defective type of informal learning based on defective models evolved. Typical laboratory practice places students in acoustic and visual isolation where they make mimetic or semi-mimetic responses to abstract recorded auditory stimuli. "Mimetic," as I employ the term, denotes imitation of a model, in the sense of B. F. Skinner's "echoic"[3] but with broader connotations. It implies a point-to-point correspondence between stimulus and response identifiable in the presence of non-significant dissimilarities of organic or affective origin which at times may attain a prominence consistent with the designation "paramimetic." In non-instructional settings overt mimetic responses are commonly associated with harsh or gentle mockery, childish chiming, moronic aping, slavish copying, passive parroting, etc., although they may also represent more positive ways of relating to others, as in the retransmission of information and the ritual repetition of oaths, prayers, greetings, cheers, toasts, exhortations, etc. Tolerance for the chiming, parroting type of mimesis generally imposed in language labs ("planned parrothood") is predictably very low, and unless exceptionally strong motivation is present, boredom, fatigue, and even revulsion soon set in.

Semi-mimetic responses regularly register the negative component of the binary formal mechanism in both intra- and extramural situations. (Don't say "ain't I." Say "aren't I." Etc., etc.) In foreign language learning, semi-mimetic responses remain in vogue today as the basis of the "linguistic" approach, as commonly practiced. "Pattern practice," "substitution drills," "transformation exercises," etc. are semi-mimetic in that a point-to-point relationship exists between part of the stimulus and part of the response. Correction of defective responses introduces additional semi-mimetic activity (not "pedió!" "Pidió!"), charged with negatively tinged emotional overtones seldom relieved by positive undertones of objective, dispassionate, intellectually stimulating technical learning. Student tolerance for the semi-mimetic, under prevailing procedures, is as slight as for the mimetic, and the potential for transfer to normal contexts of communication is no more promising.

The dearth of effective mimetic and semi-mimetic techniques in present instructional practice derives not only from the unimaginative use of relentlessly restricted types of verbal behavior in determinedly trammeled contexts and formats but also from the compulsive dedication to mutilative abstraction seemingly de rigueur in the profession. To abstract is to remove from a context. When a verbal pattern is abstracted for use in language lab drills, visual, tactile-kinesthetic, gustatory, and olfactory stimuli that might be present in real life are present no more. Except for very limited efforts to provide surrogate visual elements, no imagination is expended to account for other components of the richly sensory contexts in which communication commonly occurs.

Even the strictly verbal is further abstracted. The kinesic has disappeared with the visual and tactile, and the paralinguistic ordinarily vanishes too. Without grimaces, gestures, "body language" in general, communication is lacking a lively dimension. Without sobs, sighs, groans, grumbles, giggles, coughs, cries, snickers, whining, wheedling, whimpering, and more subtle vocal modulations associated with browbeating, pleading, seductiveness, obnoxiousness, manliness, plaintiveness, craftiness, naiveté, airs of superiority, inferiority, pomposity, bonhomie, disappointment, glee, somnolence, benevolence, and so on and on, language is lifeless.

Worst of all, the student is also abstracted. Taken out of the social contexts in which oral communication occurs, he is isolated in a booth with a machine. This arrangement is spoken of as a boon to teachers, because human neuromuscular systems can stand only so much abstracted activity. The electromechanical parts of the lab equipment are untiring and unsusceptible to ennui. Students' neuromuscular systems--young, resilient--are considered capable of withstanding thirty "optimum" minutes of this. Such is the strain, in reality, that efforts of designers to provide fast, fast, fast relief by creating an aura of unprogrammed spontaneity are pathetic. "Good morning, Johnny," smiles the "personalized" computer tutor, programmed to print out his name.

The heaven of certain educational technologists is "peopled" with computers capable of unlimited interaction with human clients, at non-mimetic as well as mimetic and semi-mimetic levels. In his Invención a dos voces Chilean novelist Enrique Lafourcade postulates the perfect robot. A female. Fantastic interaction. Heaven! Hell, as it turned out. In this pre-Lafourcadian era it seems that in language learning the function of the equipment is still to assist humans to interact with other humans, rather than with equipment. The machine is a temporary expedient, something that comes between people and should be eliminated as rapidly as possible, except as it is able on a continuing basis to contribute something of value to the interaction of humans with each other.

Demonstrably, something better than present language lab equipment and procedures must be sought. Not something capable of non-mimetic verbal intercourse, like a Lafourcadian robot, but something directly, immediately capable of helping humans to use the foreign language socially and functionally, for actual communication, in surrogate foreign settings--something capable of assisting practice so closely simulating foreign behavior that in an actual foreign milieu transfer is readily accomplished.

Speech must be restored as nearly as possible to its normal social contexts, in which booths have no part, unless for real or simulated telephone conversations. Lacking other conversation partners (given typical unrealistic, unreasonable student-teacher ratios), learners must converse with each other, learning to speak by speaking, in meaningful contexts, with fellow humans rather than to machines. The machine will be there to help them, providing contexts through visual displays and sound effects--cueing, prompting, and confirming their responses as they interact together.

Students will no longer be forced to endure the tyranny of form over content. Instead of endless paradigms, formally related but thematically discontinuous, sustained discourse consistent with student interests and needs, richly varied, revealing aspects of the foreign culture, capable of producing engrossing interest, excitement, suspense, laughter, compassion, understanding, willing emotional and intellectual involvement, will form the basis of instruction. The instructional media will facilitate such discourse through a type of visual display accessible to both members of a student team simultaneously or selectively to either of the two. Auditory cues, prompts, and confirmation will similarly be available to both, to one, or the other. This capability will enable students to communicate with each other in the foreign language from the onset of instruction.

Student performance will no longer be evaluated in an abstract way. A swimmer doesn't demonstrate his skill by executing isolated, discrete, fractionary movements without ever getting in the water (though analytical activity may comprise part of instruction). For a real test of his skill, he dives into the water and swims. Language students will likewise dive right in. Though they may flounder and splash, with proper help and encouragement they will stay afloat and reach the other side. No amount of filling in blanks, responding to true-false statements, working at multiple-choice exercises, repeating paradigms, etc. really gets them in the water. Nothing can compare, for proof of ability, joy of learning, satisfaction of success, exhilaration of achievement, with real communication in the language. The student will not perform <u>for</u> the teacher, but <u>with</u> the teacher. "Let me show you how I can talk by talking with you." The instructional media will provide the contexts.

Interpersonal games will be employed for simulating any appropriate aspect of foreign environment and behavior. "Solitaire" games will be made available for practice when no partner is at hand. Elements of skill, chance, suspense, and humor, added to authentic, interesting, often fascinating settings and circumstances taken from the foreign culture will make the games stimulating and fun to play. The game format will make possible practice in a variety of roles, under varied circumstances, with different players, as students learn selected phonological, grammatical, and semantic patterns to the point where they have skill in handling them under new contingencies. When ready for a "test," the student will get together with the teacher (or with another student while the teacher unobtrusively observes): "Let's go to a restaurant." "Let's take a ride on a bus."

Relieved of the strain, tedium, disappointment, and despair attending basically ineffectual teacher-focused presentational and evaluative aspects of language instruction before large groups of students for longer hours than the perceptive and sensitive can endure, teachers will assume new roles, enhancing their professional status, as experts, consultants, counselors, organizers, and motivators. They will be free to devote more attention to individual human needs and values in teaching, of crucial importance as relationships in our society grow more mechanical and impersonal and the anomie and alienation exhibited by students become acute. The direct, cooperative, human interaction, on a person-to-person level, that is basic to this rationale for a futuristic but not unattainable type of foreign language learning is no doubt its most valuable feature.

Time does not permit a detailed description of videodisc capabilities and how this technology can be employed in implementing many of the things sketchily outlined above. A bibliography is appended to aid those who wish to investigate technical characteristics of the various videodisc systems and acquaint themselves with educational applications that have been proposed.

A word regarding my credentials...: Over the past several years I have visited videodisc research laboratories, operated prototype equipment, attended videodisc seminars and conferences and corresponded with executives, engineers, and educators engaged in videodisc research and development. As principal investigator, I have prepared and submitted two research proposals for funding: "Psycholinguistics and the Videodisc: The Application of Theories of Second Language Acquisition to a Revolutionary New Technology" and "Production of an Experimental Videodisc for Foreign Language Learning." For the latter project I have assembled a variety of essentially camera-ready materials for conversion to the videodisc format, including illustrated dialogs, interpersonal games, simulations, and cartoons.

One of the most encouraging and exhilarating aspects of the videodisc medium is the prospect it affords of escaping our slavish dependence on books and the eye and freeing ourselves from the linear, fragmented, specialized, detached mentality that is a legacy of the Gutenberg modality. The basic message of print has been that language is for analysis. The message of the videodisc will clearly be that language is for interaction. The new sense ratio of the electronic age posited by Marshall McLuhan[4] will be evidenced in renewed emphasis on the audile and tactile, with greatly incremented involvement as a significant and welcome concomitant.

## Notes

[1]The principal types of videodisc systems thus far developed include the pressure-type player (Telefunken-Decca), optical, with laser beam (Philips-MCA), capacitance (RCA), magnetic (Sony), photographic (i/o Matrics). Many other corporations are developing systems of their own within these basic types.

[2]Edward T. Hall, The Silent Language (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

[3]B. F. Skinner, Verbal Behavior (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957).

[4]Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

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# COGNATES AND FALSE FRIENDS

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In a recent test in a Beginners German class, students were given a number of short sentences for translation into English. One of these sentences read "Ich besuche die Universität" which was translated by one student as "I beseech the university," by another as "I besiege the university." In an oral translation with a class in Intermediate German, eventuell was translated as eventually. Why?

I strongly suspect that the blame for errors of this nature must be put squarely on the authors of textbooks who preface their books or vocabulary lists with the remark that "obvious cognates are omitted"[1] or that the vocabulary is intended to be complete "except for recognizable cognates."[2] One otherwise very good textbook goes to some length in drawing the student's attention to cognates: "German and English have a good deal in common [in vocabulary]. Preceding the reading selection in every unit, specialized work deals with cognates--those words that look or sound alike and have identical or similar meaning in both languages. Cognates give you access to hundreds of "free" words. Once you learn how to recognize true cognates, you will have developed a useful tool for increasing your vocabulary, both passive (or recognitional) and active."[3]

Among the many cognates the student is supposed to guess and then verify in the end vocabulary we find Dialekt: dialect; kontrollieren: to control; Kontrolle: control; sozial: social; Chance: chance; akzeptieren: to accept; akademisch: academic; Distanz: distance; Kurzgeschichte: short story; melancholisch: melancholy; psychisch: phychic; Thema: theme.

Yet closer examination of the German word and the given English equivalent reveals that the meaning is only partially identical or not at all. For example, kontrollieren in "Wer kontrolliert das Fernsehen?"[5] may be guessed (and is glossed in the end vocabulary) to mean "Who controlls television?" when in fact kontrollieren means to check, to inspect, to supervise, whereas to control has its equivalent in beherrschen. Supervisory boards supervise radio and television stations in Germany but they do not control them. The sentence "[Man] arbeitet mit oder unter einem Professor über ein bestimmtes Thema, über revolutionäre Literatur im 19. Jahrhundert z. B. oder über die moderne Kurzgeschichte"[6] contains several cognates. Guessing and glossing leads the student to believe that a Thema is a theme whereas it should be rendered as topic or subject. And although it may be permissible at this early stage to translate Kurzgeschichte as short story, the teacher should explain to the student that the latter is more closely related to the German Novelle,[7] at the same time taking this opportunity to point out that a novel is not a Novelle but a Roman.

This disturbing phenomenon is by no means limited to this particular textbook, but can be encountered in almost all texts currently on the market.

Webster defines cognates as follows: "related in a manner that involves borrowing rather than descent from or as well as descent from an ancestral language (English tobacco and French tabac are cognates)."[8] While this is no doubt true for words such as tobacco, tabac, and Tabak; Gold and gold; Sommer and summer; and many others, the definition does not imply that cognates are also identical in meaning. Yet textbook authors seldom fail to underline the high frequency of cognates in German and English in order to make the study of the language "easier" or more palatable, when in fact each and every occurrence of a cognate should serve as a warning signal to both teacher and student to watch out for dangers and pitfall.

Another perpetrator of errors in translation, although this time into German, is the German-language press in Canada and in the United States which habitually talks about the Industrie- und Handelskammer when they actually mean the (North American) Chamber of Commerce. The Industrie- und Handelskammer is a self-governing public corporation of industrial enterprises (industry, trade, transportation, credit institutions, insurance companies, etc.) in which membership is compulsory. It looks after the general interests of its members, sets ethical standards, regulates the training of apprentices and also administers their final examination.[9] The Chamber of Commerce, on the other hand, is a voluntary association of businessmen established "to promote the commercial and industrial interests of a community, state, or nation"[10] by attracting industry and tourism to its region. It does not have the official function of the Industrie- und Handelskammer nor the same status under the law.

The widespread practice of talking about cognates and thereby unwittingly referring to words common to two languages and supposedly identical or nearly identical in meaning leads to errors like those mentioned already. These are by no means limited to students who, after all, receive their knowledge of German from textbooks and their teachers. My own experience and these few examples indicate that neither students nor teachers, journalists nor translators are immune to the cognate disease. With the constant increase in international communication, trade and tourism, it is safe to predict that the "international" vocabulary will grow still further. Correspondingly, so will the errors in translation, since the indiscriminate use of terms such as "cognate" have led us into a false sence of security.

Therefore I would suggest that, at least in beginners' classes, we abandon the term cognate completely and say instead that there are many false friends and only a few genuine ones.

The term "false friend" was first used, as far as I have been able to determine, in 1928 by Maxime Koessler and Jules Derocquigny in the title of their book Les faux amis, ou: Les trahisions du vocabulaire anglais.[11] Neither Webster nor dictionaries of linguistic terms have an entry on false friends. The term "Germanismus" or "Germanism" which is often used to describe incidences of interference is not adequate. Wahrig defines it as a "beim Übersetzen in eine andere Sprache übernommene Spracheigentümlichkeit,"[12] Webster as "a characteristic feature of German occurring in another language or dialect."[13] From these two definitions it can be readily seen that both encompass more than just individual words or morphemes which interest us here.

With Hans-Wilhelm Klein,[14] we shall define false friends as words which are identical or nearly identical in form and usually in origin, yet distinct in semantic content. This definition must be expanded to include analogous formation of words such as überhören and overhear.

The problems created by the unnoticed existence of false friends are numerous. Obviously the greatest danger exists with methods and textbooks which employ the so-called direct approach, which by its very nature makes precise definitions of words almost impossible. Although glossaries usually accompany these textbooks, either as an appendix or bound separately, neither teacher nor student will verify the meaning of a word if he thinks he knows or can intelligently guess the meaning of it. To say that the context usually provides the correct meaning is not a valid observation. While it is true that it should be impossible to translate Prägnant (concise, terse) as pregnant, the same cannot be said of Manager (hoher Angestellter, Leiter eines Unternehmens) and manager who would be called a Geschäftsführer in German (manager of a chain store: Filialleiter). Also, if a student thinks that Artist translates as artist, then he will conclude quite logically that artist translates as Artist. This is usually not the case since there may be partial semantic identity and the student cannot know how to make the choice (Artist: circus or variety artist; artist: in the widest sense).

An additional but less serious difficulty lies in the fact that even within German there may be considerable differences, i.e. between the usage in West and East Germany, Switzerland, and Austria.

The danger inherent in false friends grows considerably with the increasing use of reading selections of a political, sociological, and journalistic nature which tend to use more "international" terminology and thereby often obfuscate rather than clarify an idea. Terms such as Frustration and Manipulation have ideological and political connotations which are absent in English. These terms can be explained historically and semantically, but they cannot be translated in one or two words. Obviously, the often welcomed replacement of literary selections by texts from the social sciences in our textbooks and readers, when coupled with the false security of teacher and student, gives rise to even more semantic equating of words which are really false friends.

In addition to being aware of false friends, there are other ways and means of guarding against them. One would be to extend the contrastive method in language teaching to the lexicon. Textbook authors usually limit this approach to syntactic structures. Second, the teacher must work with monolingual dictionaries such as Wahrig's Deutsches Wörterbuch and the new Duden as well as the Webster and Random House and other dictionaries in order to establish the precise meaning of a word in a given context. Even the best bilingual dictionaries cannot provide this information, nor do they claim to.

Lastly, we should draw the student's attention to the fact common to all languages that words once born or borrowed, take on a life of their own and their semantic content may and usually does develop in a direction which cannot be anticipated.

## Notes

[1]Ellin S. Feld, et al., eds., Anfang und Fortschritt: An Introduction to German (Toronto: Macmillan, 1973), p. 399.

[2]Leland S. Babcock and Erich A. Frey, German and Germany in Review (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1972), p. 263.

[3]Jack Moeller and Helmut Liedloff, Deutsch heute: Grundstufe (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), p. xiv.

[5]Ibid., "German-English Vocabulary," p. 341ff.

[5]Ibid., p. 196. See also p. 191, line 31: "Die Kontrolle einer Rundfunkanstalt liegt bei einem Rundfunkrat."

[6]Ibid., p. 303, lines 34-37.

7See Klaus Doderer, "Die angelsächsische short story und die deutsche Kurzgeschichte," Neuere Sprachen (1953), pp. 417-24.

[8]Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language (Springfield, MA.: Merriam, 1976).

[9]See "Gesetz zur vorläufigen Regelung des Rechts der Industrie- und Handelskammern vom 18. 12. 1956."

[10]Op. cit.

[11](Paris: Librairie Vuibert, 1928). The problem of false friends is by no means limited to German and English. Cf. also two of the most recent works: Mário Mascherpe and Laura Zamarin, Os Falsos Cognatos na Tradução do Inglês para o Português. 2.a edição ampliada (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro: Difel, 1976); Don L. F. Nilsen, "False Cognates in English and Spanish," Studies in Descriptive and Historical Linguistics: Festschrift for Winfred P. Lehmann, ed. by Paul J. Hopper (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1977), pp. 173-87.

[12]Gerhard Wahrig, Deutsches Wörterbuch (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann, 1975).

[13]Op. cit.

[14]H.-W. Klein, Schwierigkeiten des deutsch-französischen Wortschatzes (Stuttgart: Klett, 1968), p. 3.

## False Friends

The following list of false friends in intended to demonstrate the magnitude of the problem and does not pretend to be complete. It represents a corpus of false friends collected over some years at all levels of teaching German. Additional sources are various textbooks, translations done in the recently instituted "Diploma in Translation" programme at the University of British Columbia, and the German-language press in Canada. The feature shared by all these words is that their occurrence in a text may be expected to produce false translations. The entries have been checked against the following reference works: Duden: Etymologie: Herkunftswörterbuch der deutschen Sprache (Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut, 1963); Duden: Fremdwörterbuch (Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut, 1966); Duden: Das grosse Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache in sechs Bänden (Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut, 1976 [A-Ci], 1976 [Cl-F], 1977 [G-Kal]); Duden: Stilwörterbuch der deutschen Sprache (Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut, 1970); Duden: Vergleichendes Synonymwörterbuch: Sinnverwandte Wörter und Wendungen (Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institute, 1964); Harrap's Standard German and English Dictionary. Part One: German-English (London: Harrap, 1963 [A-E], 1967 [F-K], 1974 [L-r]); F. Kluge und A. Götze, Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache bearbeitet von W. Mitzka (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967); Langenscheidts Enzyklopädisches Wörterbuch: Deutsch-Englisch, 2 vols. (Berlin und München: Langenscheidt, 1974-1975); Langenscheidts Enzyklopädisches Wörterbuch: Englisch-Deutsch, 2 vols. (Berlin und München: Langenscheidt, 1969-1974); Der Sprachbrockhaus: Deutsches Bildwörterbuch (Wiesbaden: Brockhaus, 1974); Gerhard Wahrig, Deutsches Wörterbuch (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann, 1975); Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language (Springfield, MA.: Merriam, 1976).

| | |
|---|---|
| absolvieren<br>to graduate, complete one's studies | absolve<br>los-, freisprechen |
| Agonie<br>death struggle, death throes | agony<br>heftiger Schmerz |
| Akademiker<br>someone with post-secondary education, university graduate | academician<br>Mitglied einer Akademie |
| Akkord<br>piecework | accord<br>Übereinstimmung, Einklang, Abkommen |
| Aktion<br>campaign, operation, drive | action<br>Handeln, Tat |
| aktuell<br>topical, current, fashionable | actual<br>tatsächlich, wirklich, eigentlich |
| alarmieren<br>to alert | alarm<br>erschrecken, jemanden warnen |
| Aliment<br>alimony | aliment<br>Futter, Nahrungsmittel |
| Allee (usually with trees)<br>avenue | alley<br>Gasse |
| ambulant<br>mobile, ambulatory | ambulant<br>wandernd, beweglich |
| Ambulanz<br>outpatients' clinic | ambulance<br>Krankenwagen |
| annoncieren<br>to advertise, put in an advertisement | announce<br>ankündigen, enthüllen |

Antike
  classical antiquity
Antiquar
  second-hand bookseller
apart
  striking, charming
Apartment
  (comfortable, luxurious) apartment
Artist
  acrobat, (variety) artist
asozial
  anomic, socially deviant
Assessor
  (2nd lowest civil service rank); assistor

Bagage
  riffraff, rabble
Baracken
  (wooden or Quonset) huts, hovels
behalten
  to keep
Benzin
  gas(oline)
Billion
  trillion
blamieren
  to make someone look like a fool
blank
  shiny, naked, bare
Block
  (large house with numerous apartments)
brav
  well-behaved, upright
Büro
  office

Chef
  boss, head

Dame
  lady
Delikatessen
  delicacies
dezent
  discreet, unobtrusive, subdued
Direktion
  management, board of directors
durchsehen
  to look over, peruse

Elaborat
  labored product, concoction
Emigrant
  refugee, émigré
Etikett
  label, tag
eventuell
  possibly, if necessary

Fabrik
  factory
familiär
  (concerning the family)
famos
  splendid, swell
fatal
  disastrous, calamitous, unfortunate
faul
  lazy, idel, rotten
Fraktion
  parliamentary party
Fussball
  soccer

antique
  altes Möbelstück od. Kunstgegenstand
antiquary
  Altertumskenner, -sammler
apart
  einzeln, (ab)gesondert
apartment
  Wohnung
artist
  Künstler (in the widest sense)
asocial
  ungesellig, eigenbrötlerisch
assessor
  Steuereinschätzer

baggage
  Gepäck
barracks
  Kaserne
behold
  erblicken, ansehen
benzene
  Benzol
billion
  Milliarde
blame
  rügen, die Schuld geben
blank
  verwirrt, leer, unbeschrieben, -bedruckt
block
  (Strassenzug zwischen zwei Querstrassen)
brave
  mutig, tapfer
Bureau
  (Regierungs)Behörde, Amt

chef
  Chefkoch, Küchenchef

dame
  Weibebild
delicatessen
  Feinkostgeschäft
decent
  anständig, ordentlich
direction
  Richtung, Führung, Anweisung
to see through
  durchschauen, hinter die Schliche kommen

elaboration
  Ausarbeitung, Ausführung, Verfeinerung
emigrant
  Auswanderer
etiquette
  Etikette, Umgangsformen
eventually
  schliesslich, endlich

fabric
  Gefüge, Stoff, Gewebe
familiar
  vertraut, bekannt
famous
  berühmt
fatal
  tödlich
foul
  stinkend, widerlich
fraction
  (Bruch)Teil, Fragment, Stückchen
football
  amerik. Fussball

Gastronomie
(restaurant) catering tra...
generell
universal, always
genial
of genius
Gift
poison
gotische "Literatur"
Gothic
Grad
degree
Gymnasiast
(highschool student)
Gymnasium
highschool
Gymnastik
(rhythmic) floor exercise

halten
hold, keep, stop
handeln
to trade, deal, bargain
Handlung
action, act, plot
Handwerk
trade, craft
heftig
violent, hard
Hochschule
academy, university (any post-sec. school)

Kadaver
(animal) carcass
Kamerad
companion, mate, chum
Kaution
bail, security
Koffer
suit-case, trunk
Kolportage
cheap, sensational writing
Konfektion
ready-made clothes, off-the-peg
Konkurrenz
competition
konsequent
consistent
Konskription
conscription (with possibility of buying off)
Kontrolle
check, examination
Konzept
notes, draft
köstlich
delicious, savory
Kur
(medical) treatment
kräftig
strong
Kriminalroman
detective story, mystery

Lektüre
reading, reading material
Likör
liqueur, cordial
Lust
joy, desire
lustig
gay, merry, funny

gastronomy
Kochkunst
generally
im grossen und ganzen, im allgemeinen
genial
freundlich, jovial
gift
Geschenk
Gothic literature
Schauerliteratur
grade
Klasse, Rang, Stufe
gymnast
Turner, Gymnast
gymnasium
Turnhalle
gymnastics
Turnen

halt
anhalten
handle
anfassen, handhaben, gebrauchen
handling
Handhabung, Gebrauch, Aus-, Durchführung
handiwork
Handarbeit
hefty
stark, kräftig, schwer
highschool
Oberschule, Gymnasium

cadaver
(menschl.) Leichnam
comrade
Genosse
caution
Vorsicht, Achtung
coffer
Kasten, Truhe (bes. für Wertsachen)
colportage
Hausierhandel (bes. mit religiös. Büchern)
confection
Zubereitung; Konfekt
concurrence
Zusammentreffen, Zu-, Übereinstimmung
consequent
(nach)folgend, folgerichtig
conscription
(allg.) Wehrdienst, -pflicht
control
Macht, Aufsicht
concept
Begriff, Gedanke
costly
teuer, kostspielig
cure
Heilung, Heilmittel
crafty
listig, verschlagen
criminal story
verbrecherische Geschichte

lecture
Vortrag, Vorlesung
liquor
Spirituosen
lust
(sinnliche) Begierde, leidenschaftliches Verlangen
lusty
derb, lebhaft, frisch

Macher
  maker (maker and shaker), doer
Magistrat
  municipal council
Manufakturwaren
  textiles, dry goods
Mappe
  briefcase
Marmelade
  jam
Matinée
  morning performance
Meinung
  opinion
Mist
  muck, junk, manure
Mittel
  average, means, remedy
Mode
  fashion, style
Moskito
  mosquito (in tropical countries, disseminating
  malaria)

Nationalökonomie
  economics
Novelle
  (short story)

Öffentlich
  public
Offizier (milit.)
  officer

ordinär
  common, vulgar, coarse
originell
  original (in the sense of ingenious, novel)

Pakat
  parcel, package
Pamphlet
  (defamatory) pamphlet
Paragraph
  (jr.) article, section
Parole
  pass word, catchphrase, slogan
Partisan
  guerilla
patent
  fine, splendid, great
pathetisch
  full of pathos, pompous
Periode (electr.)
  cycle
Phantasie
  imagination
Phrase
  empty talk, idle chatter
plump
  clumsy, crude, tactless
Portier
  doorman, receptionist
prägnant
  concise, succinct
prinzipiell
  in principle
probieren
  taste, sample, try
Prokurist
  authorised signatory, proxy
Promotion
  awarding of doctorate

maker
  Gott, Schöpfer
magistrate
  (richterl.) Beamter, Friedensrichter
manufactured goods
  Fertigerzeugnisse, -waren
map
  Landkarte
marmalade
  Orangenmarmelade
matinee
  Nachmittagsvorstellung
meaning
  Bedeutung
mist
  Nebel
middle
  Mitte
mode
  Art und Weise, Form, Modus
mosquito
  Stechmücke

national economy
  Wirtschaft (eines Landes)
novel
  Roman

openly
  offen, freimütig
officer
  Offizier, Beamter, leitender Angestellter,
  Polizist, Amtsträger
ordinary
  gewöhnlich, üblich, normal
original
  original, echt

packet
  Päckchen
pamphlet
  Broschüre, Heft
paragraph
  Abschnitt, Absatz
parole
  bedingter Straferlass
partisan
  Parteigänger, -anhänger
patent
  offensichtlich, -kundig
pathetic
  kläglich, armselig, traurig
period
  Periodendauer
fantasy
  Phantasiegebilde, Einbildung
phrase
  (Rede)Wendung, Redensart
plump
  mollig, pummelig, prall
porter
  Gepäckträger
pregnant
  schwanger
principally
  hauptsächlich
probe
  sondieren, prüfen, eindringen
procurer
  Ver-, Beschaffer, Vermittler
promotion
  Beförderung, Werbung

Prospekt
  leaflet, advertising brochure
Provision
  commission
Prozedur
  (cumbersome) ordeal
psychisch
  (as opp. to "physisch")
Publizist
  publicist, journalist

Quote
  ratio, quota

reell
  honest, solid, fair
referieren
  to report, read a paper
reklamieren
  to file a complaint
rekognissieren
  reconnoiter
Rente
  pension
requirieren
  to requisition, commandeer
riskant
  risky, precarious
romanisch
  Romance, Romanesque

Selleria
  (the root of) celery
Sender
  radio station, transmitter
sensibel
  sensitive, touchy
sensitiv
  (medic.) sensitive
sentimental
  soppy, maudlin, crooning
skrupellos
  unscrupulous, unconscionable
skurril
  odd, peculiar, farcical
spannen
  to stretch, bend, tighten
sparen
  save
Spektakel
  racket, din, fuss
Spiel
  play, game
Spur
  trace, trail, rut
Stadium
  stage, phase
Stall
  stable, sty
Station
  (streetcar) stop; ward (hospital)
streng
  severe, hard, rigid
Strom
  (large) river, current
Student
  (post-sec.) student
Stuhl
  chair
Subskriptionspreis
  pre-publication price
sympathisch
  congenial, likeable

prospect
  Aussicht, Vorausschau
provision
  Vorkehrung, Vorsorge, Bedingung
procedure
  Verfahren
psychic
  Übersinnlich
publisher
  Verleger, Verlag

quote
  Zitat (quotes = Anführungszeichen)

real
  tatsächlich, echt, wirklich
refer
  verweisen, hinweisen, übergeben
reclaim
  zurückfordern, kultivieren
recognize
  (wieder)arkennen, gelten lassen
rent
  Miete
require
  erfordern, brauchen, verlangen
risqué
  gewagt, schlüpfrig
Roman
  römisch

celery
  Stengelsellerie
sender
  Absender
sensible
  vernünftig
sensitive
  feinfühlig, empfindlich, sensibel
sentimental
  empfindsam, gefühlvoll
scrupulous
  voller Skrupel, skrupellös, (über)gewissenhaft
scurrilous
  unanständig, zotig
span
  umspannen, überbrücken
spare
  (ver)schonen
spectacle
  Aufsehen erregender Anblick, Schauspiel
spiel
  Gerede, Geschwätz
spur
  Sporen, Ansporn
stadium
  Stadion
stall
  (Markt)Bude, Box (einzelner Platz im Stall)
station
  Bahnhof
strong
  stark, fest
stream
  Wasserlauf, Gewässer, Rinnsal
student
  Schüler, Student
stool
  Hocker
subscription rate
  Abonnementpreis
sympathetic
  mitfühlend, verständnisvoll

Tablett
  tray
Taxe
  charge, fee
Technik
  technology
Technologie
  (theory of production techniques applied in technology)
Teller
  plate
Textbuch
  text, libretto
Thema
  topic, subject
Trost
  consolation

Überhören
  not to hear something (unintentionally), to listen to something (intentionally)
Überreichen
  to hand something over, present something
Übersicht
  overview

Varieté
  vaudeville, burlesque

Vehikel
  (contempt.) wreck, jalopy
virtuos
  virtuoso, masterly
vital
  lively, vigorous

Wache
  guard, watch
Waggon
  (railway) car
Warenhaus
  department store

Zensur
  censorship
Zirkel
  pair of compasses

tablet
  Tablette, Täfelchen
tax
  Steuer
technique
  Technik (eines Musikers usw.), Methode
technology
  Technik (angewandte Naturwissenschaft)

teller
  (Bank)Kassierer(in)
textbook
  Lehrbuch, Leitfaden
theme
  Gegenstand, Stoff
trust
  Vertrauen, Zuversicht

overhear
  (Mit)hören, lauschen

overreach
  zu weit gehen, überschreiten
oversight
  versehen, Aufsicht

variety
  Verschiedenheit, Abwechslung (variety show = Bunter Nachmittag od. Abend)
vehicle
  Fahrzeug
virtuous
  sittlich, keusch, züchtig
vital
  lebenswichtig, grundlegend

wake
  Totenwache, Leichenschmaus
wagon
  (vierrädriger) Wagen
warehouse
  Lagerhaus

censure
  Tadel, Verweis, Rüge
circle
  Kreis

# ORAL PROFICIENCY TESTING IN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE: WHY AND HOW?

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When do we test the oral proficiency of our students? The answer is: hardly ever.

In 1974, the Northeast Conference conducted a survey that revealed that only 6.5% of the responding secondary school systems (207), grades K-12, use any type of direct method testing to establish the proficiency level of their students in any of the four skill areas.[1] I am reasonably certain that the facts are not much more favorable at the college level. Any yet we continue to tell our students, verbally and in the printed pages of the college catalogue, that we teach to develop all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. But how do we know to what extent we have developed that fourth skill, speaking, if we do not test for it--and moreover, test for it in real life situations that focus on the student's ability to communicate in the target language accurately and effectively?

There are several reasons why we do not test for oral proficiency in high school and college after our students have studied the target languages one, two, three, or four semesters or years; there are several other reasons why we ought to. This paper is concerned with the WHY of oral proficiency testing and the HOW of accomplishing it.

I If we look at the reasons why most of our students want to learn a foreign language, particularly in college, we find that, in most cases, they want to be able to SPEAK the target language well enough to communicate with native speakers in the foreign country. Therefore, the language skill of primary concern to our students is speaking. Some students have plans to use the target language in a general way, say as tourists, while others plan to use it in a special way, as an auxiliary skill in their prospective profession. Although these two groups are not really homogeneous, both of them must be able to handle verbally at least common daily situations. The student of professional schools--for example law, engineering, business administration, medicine, hotel and restaurant management, and communication--must in addition acquire a more specialized vocabulary, sufficient to enable him to manage successfully high frequency situations of both a social and a professional nature in the target language.

Thus there exist two quite distinctly different groups among our students whose specific foreign language goals are such that we need to show them, after they have studied a foreign language for a period of time, what level of proficiency they have achieved. This is the primary reason WHY we should determine the oral proficiency level of our students via the direct-method of testing at various points in the course of their foreign language studies.

We do a fairly good job of ascertaining our students' ability to use the component aspects of the foreign language in speaking, reading, and writing (i.e., mastery of subject-verb agreement, correct word order, pronunciation, recitation of dialogues, etc.) by employing either in-house or standardized tests, but when it comes to testing our students' ability to communicate orally in the target language, we fail them miserably.

The obvious question is, HOW can we test speaking ability? This question can be subdivided into three more specific ones. First, how can we go about establishing performance objectives for communicative ability? Next, how can we test for oral proficiency? And finally, how can we arrive at a meaningful rating? These are questions far more complex than WHY we should test for oral proficiency at all. At once we are faced with two interrelated problems: first, the apparent absence of easily accessible, effective techniques to elicit (at every level) natural, ratable speech in the target language; and second, the apparent absence of a reliable set of evaluation criteria to rate the elicited speech sample.

Let us review for a moment some of the primary techniques for establishing the student's oral skills that go beyond the mere repeating of sentences or sounds, or the reading aloud of a printed text, and that are currently in use in high schools and colleges around the country. The first technique that comes to mind is to provide the student with a picture, or a series of pictures, and to ask him to describe the picture or sequence of events he sees illustrated before him. This method, although it does elicit a ratable speech sample, is extremely limiting, since the meaningfulness and the naturalness of the speech sample depends almost entirely on the subject matter of the picture or sequence of pictures presented to the student. This technique, at best, may be used for a limited achievement test, but not for a proficiency test, which in fairness to the student needs to elicit a much wider variety of structures and a much broader range of vocabulary than a single picture or sequence of pictures is able to elicit. In addition, the task the student is asked to perform is extremely artificial. How often do we find ourselves in our NATIVE language in a situation in which we are asked to describe pictures?

It would seem that another commonly used method for eliciting a speech sample in the target language, the question and answer technique, would be a more productive one, since it presents the student with a much more realistic task, particularly if the test is conducted in a face-to-face situation. Even if the student's responses are tape-recorded, as circumstances may dictate, this technique can still be defended on the basis of the testing situation being somewhat analogous to a telephone conversation. The problem with this particular technique is that the eighteen to twenty-five questions generally being asked of the student are not topic oriented, that is, they are not grouped in a cluster of six or seven

questions around three or four major topics. They are generally isolated questions, unrelated to each other. This elicitation technique is, on the whole, therefore as artificial as the one of the picture description test. And like the first technique, it is also probably better suited to measuring oral achievement rather than oral proficiency.

Incidentally, both of these elicitation techniques are used in the oral portion of the MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Test, the Advanced Placement Test, and the Pimsleur Modern Language Proficiency Test.[2] Actually, all three of these tests are really testing achievement in a very broad sense, although none of them is intended to coincide with the content of any particular textbook or teaching program. Instead, each reflects the general synthesis or composite picture of content across a number of typical foreign language courses at any level. In short, these tests attempt to measure primarily the student's command of specific linguistic elements, such as vocabulary, grammar, and the like, instead of determining the extent to which he is able to use the language effectively in pragmatic, real-life situations.

A third testing method, a face-to-face interview, would produce a more realistic and meaningful speech sample, since the examiner is here not limited to any particular topic and thus has the freedom to pursue at any length any topic of interest to the STUDENT. In addition, the interview test is less likely to turn into an achievement test, by which I mean a more or less syllabus-oriented test, but remains a direct-method test of oral proficiency, which I define as a test that seeks to establish (even at a relatively low level of proficiency) the communicative ability of a student in a real-life situation.

What makes the interview test particularly attractive as a technique for establishing oral proficiency is the opportunity for the tester to keep the interview only minimally structured. Thus the examiner, after a brief period of general conversation to put the student at ease (let us say two or three minutes), can quickly and casually cover a wide range of topics, and can then zero in on those topics that seem to be of particular interest to the student, as judged by his responses to the questions being asked. The examiner can push the student linguistically on these topics as far as he can go, dropping back now and then to an easier and more comfortable level or topic, and can use the same technique three or four times in a ten to fifteen minute period to be sure that the student's level of proficiency has been clearly established.

At the end of the interview, which should conclude with a casual wind-down phase of two or three minutes, the student is left with the feeling that he really talked about topics HE was interested in, but that he was not always able to express himself as fluently about them as he might have wanted to. This type of elicitation technique removes from the oral test the artificiality of the two other techniques described earlier, yet leaves the examinee at the conclusion of the test with a realistic sense of accomplishment.

There is only one oral interview test in existence, developed twenty-two years ago by the U.S. Foreign Service Institute, that meets satisfactorily the three most important criteria of any test, those of validity, reliability, and practicality. This test is commonly known as the FSI Interview Test. Claudia P. Wilds, one of the originators of the test, has described it in detail in Testing Language Proficiency.[3] The test has a high face- and content validity; it has been proven repeatedly over the years to be an extremely reliable test;[4] and it is a very practical test instrument, at least for use by a number of government agencies.[5] In addition to the FSI, the test is also used with only minor variations by the CIA, the Defense Language Institute (DLI), and the Peace Corps to determine the oral proficiency of their career personnel. Unfortunately, this test was not designed for use in high schools and colleges; thus its usefulness to educators in public and private schools and colleges is at best questionable, at least at this time.

Nevertheless, the Department of Education of the Province of New Brunswick, Canada, a basically bilingual province, has started to employ this test on a voluntary basis in its secondary school system. And in this country, the New Jersey Department of Education has started to use this test for purposes of certifying secondary school teachers employed in bilingual programs. Although, to my knowledge, there has been no other use of this particular test outside the government, I can see it being used widely in college foreign language teacher education programs, in the admission process for foreign language graduate programs, and in the awarding of foreign language teaching fellowships. For a more general use in high school and college, however, the test would need to be adapted to fit the linguistic needs and realities of foreign language programs outside the government.

Since the FSI Interview Test is a well constructed and carefully evaluated test instrument, I would highly recommend its adaptation for our needs. Although this is neither the time nor the place to talk about the details of such a project, you may want to know that a number of colleagues in the Midwest, Northeast, and Southwest are currently working on such an adaptation, with the encouragement of the FSI and ETS.[6] Here, however, I would like to suggest some suitable topics and effective question techniques that we can use immediately in an interview test, and then I shall comment briefly on the need for us to establish meaningful evaluation criteria for a direct-method, oral proficiency test.

II Each interview test should be conducted in an informal and congenial atmosphere. Since the tester, particularly in high school, probably knows the student testee very well, a personal question about the student's life (perhaps the family has recently moved to a new home, or the student has recently bought a car or a motorcycle), an inquiry about the student's various in-school or out-of-school activities, or an

appropriate, casual question about a member of his family may break the ice to commence the interview. If the student is not known to the tester, all kinds of obvious questions may be used at this stage, from questions about the student's family (size, age of siblings, profession of family members) to the student's favorite academic subjects, out-of-school activities, or career plans.

When asking these initial questions, the tester needs to keep two points in mind. First, he should avoid questions that can be answered either by "Yes" or "No," unless their answer is followed immediately by the question "Why?" Second, if the student's response to the initial question warrants further questions, the tester either should not miss the opportunity to pursue any given topic in more detail right then, or he should make a mental note to himself to return to the topic at a later time.

Instead of yes/no questions, all questions should be built around the who-what-when-where-why-how frame, which elicits ratable speech samples and not merely single words. The tester needs to remember also that this test is a conversation between two individuals, thus his reactions--both visual and verbal--should show genuine interest in what the examinee is saying. Furthermore, the tester should always be alert for an opportunity to ask additional follow-up questions, such as: "Why do you say that?," "Why are you for that?," "What do you have against that?"

Of course, the last two follow-up questions ask the student to express his opinion, and not every student may be willing to do that, even though he may be linguistically capable of doing so. In that case, his answer will be short and indicate to the tester to move on to a different topic.

What the tester needs to keep foremost in mind is to let the student talk: that is, to zero in on a topic the student is interested in talking about, and to keep him talking on that topic with supplementary questions that elicit from him more and more difficult structures and sophisticated vocabulary. If the student reaches the limit of his linguistic ability, a quick retreat to a more comfortable linguistic level is in order, either by smoothly changing the topic or by asking an easier question on the same topic. What the tester wants to know is how the student can handle various linguistic structures and situations, thus the particular topic being discussed is really of secondary importance.

There are a number of topical clusters that are particularly useful at the lower proficiency levels. Food items, travelling, making small purchases, giving directions, and describing objects, people, or events of either the native or target language country, will elicit useful, ratable speech samples.

An important question at this point is, how should the speech sample be rated? The letter grades A-F are unsuitable, unless they are based on detailed evaluation criteria. The more specific, not necessarily the more detailed, the evaluation criteria are, the more reliable the resulting rating of the speech sample will be.

A good beginning would be to break each linguistic performance down into its major components, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and level of content. This breakdown is quite conventional. If we write these five categories horizontally on top of a page and list to the left of them vertically a range of points from zero to five for each area, we have the rudiments of a simple, useful grid for evaluating our students' linguistic performance. Next, we need to define what the various points on the grid mean. It is here that most grids of this type get into trouble. Instead of a full description of the point system being used, they frequently offer only the following brief explanatory notes: five points = "excellent," four points = "very good to good," three points = "good to adequate," etc. But what does a "good to adequate" performance in any linguistic component area really mean? I do not have the slightest idea, and the teachers using this particular grid with its vague descriptions probably do not either.

But this type of narrative description of a linguistic performance, totally inadequate if used by itself, is not hopeless. It is a start, but it needs to be backed up by a far more detailed description of each of the five linguistic components that gives meaning to the point system used. For example, if we know that zero points in grammar means "Entirely inaccurate use of even the simplest grammatical structures," then the general narrative description of the zero-point level "inadequate" becomes indeed meaningful. For vocabulary, the zero-point level description may read "Totally inadequate for even the simplest conversation to take place," and for pronunciation it may read "Unintelligible to a native speaker of the target language."

To develop such a detailed set of narrative descriptions for each of the five components identified earlier at each of the five performance levels will take some time and hard work. However, since the oral proficiency evaluation criteria will be applicable to all foreign languages alike, including even English being taught as a foreign language in bi-lingual programs, I suggest that a given school district and a college in its area view the development of these narrative descriptions as a joint project. This type of collaboration among all language teachers will assure that the evaluation criteria across languages in a given district or college are consistent, no matter when or by whom the student is tested.

The existence of written criteria will also enable out-of-district schools and colleges, in which oral proficiency is not tested separately, to familiarize themselves with the criteria used in evaluating the student's oral performance, which should facilitate the student's proper placement in the language program of the new school or college. Proper college placement of graduating high school students will

also be facilitated by the establishment of widely accepted oral proficiency criteria, particularly when such criteria become uniformly applicable throughout the state with the cooperation of the respective State Department of Education.

One more suggestion about the point system. It should be a weighted system, by which I mean that not all of the five components ought to be treated as equal. Some of them are more important to a successful attempt at oral communication than others. For example, most language teachers would agree that in oral communication grammar, vocabulary, and level of content are more influential in retarding or advancing the communicative process than are fluency and pronunciation. I therefore suggest that fluency and pronunciation be assigned weights of "1," level of content and vocabulary weights of "2," and grammar a weight of "3." The resultant grid, showing the five components described earlier, each scored from zero to five, could schematically be illustrated as shown in Table 1. The next step is to convert the range of total points (0-45) of Table 1 into proficiency levels. Depending on the preciseness desired, the points could be divided into three, four, or five proficiency levels, as shown in Table 2.

It is at once apparent that descriptions for a scale consisting of five levels (C) will be more detailed and precise than those for a scale that consists of only three levels (A). The slightly narrower range of points at the highest proficiency level is intentional, since that level represents the highest level of oral proficiency that can be achieved after a non-native of the target language has studied the foreign language up to six years in high school or three years in college.

I would not suggest that each level shown in Table 2 be equated with a letter grade, although it could be. However, I would insist that clear performance objectives for oral communication be established and written down, in addition to the narrative descriptions of the evaluation criteria. These performance objectives need to be established district- and college-wide and ought to be the same across all languages, so that every teacher administering the oral proficiency test, or trying to place a student who has been tested elsewhere in his language program, would know immediately at what level the student can speak. For example, a Level 1 student in Scale C of Table 2 should perhaps be able to carry on, although quite haltingly, a very simple and fragmentary conversation about himself and his family: giving the size of his family; describing when he usually gets up in the morning, or goes to bed at night; naming his after-school activities; and talking about main meals and his favorite foods and drinks. A Level 4 student, on the other hand, should be able to express himself quite accurately and with some confidence, using simple constructions, on such topics as current events; his daily routine; his studies, work, hobbies, and interests; to narrate a sequence of events; and to ask in simple language for help when he sees himself confronted with difficulties or complications in his studies or in his work.

The performance objectives in the area of oral proficiency should always be oriented towards real-life situations and should embrace those linguistic activities one could reasonably expect a non-native at a given proficiency level to engage in.

Determining the communicative ability of our foreign language students in high school and college at various points in their learning process with a direct-method, oral proficiency test--one that is based on real-life situations, and one that makes use of clearly defined evaluation criteria--is a challenge we as foreign language teachers must accept. The non-existence of a satisfactory oral proficiency test, ready for our immediate use, is one of the weakest points in our otherwise strong and versatile nation-wide program of testing foreign language skills.

## Notes

[1] Goals Clarification: Curriculum, Teaching, Evaluation, Warren C. Born, ed. (Middlebury, Vt.: Northeast Conference, 1975), pp. 38-41.

[2] MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Test (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1963). The oral portion of the Advanced Placement Test is available only in French and Spanish. This test is also distributed by ETS. Also, Pimsleur Modern Foreign-Language Proficiency Tests (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967).

[3] Claudia P. Wilds, "The Oral Interview Test," Testing Language Proficiency, Randall L. Jones and Bernard Spolsky, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975), pp. 29-44.

[4] A cross-language reliability study, conducted by the FSI in 1973, included French, German, and Spanish tests and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.85. The most recent in-house reliability study, conducted by Marianne Adams of the FSI in 1977 and as of this writing still unpublished, included 150 recorded interviews in French, German, and Spanish (half of them administered by the FSI and the other half by the CIA). This latest intra-language reliability study, in which 21 raters participated (six in French, four in German, and eleven in Spanish) yielded for each language a range of correlational coefficients as follows: French 0.89-0.96; German 0.89-0.98; and Spanish 0.83-0.96. These are excellent results, indeed. They demonstrate once more the high reliability of the scoring system used in the FSI Interview Test.

[5]Administration of the FST Interview Test, as practiced by the government, requires the presence of two testers for each candidate being tested in a twenty to thirty minute time frame. At this rate, each testing team is able to conduct in a eight-hour day an average of fifteen tests, at a cost of approximately $40 per test, according to the figures supplied for 1977 by the Testing Committee of the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR). The personnel required and the amount of money needed to use the FSI test in its present form in high school and college are clearly prohibitive. However, there is no reason why an adapted version of the test cannot be administered by one person, who tests three to five students at the same time. With these logistic changes made, the test could also become practical for use outside the government.

[6]At a recent conference on direct testing of speaking proficiency, held in March of 1978 at Georgetown University, the author met several colleagues who, beside himself, are actively engaged in adapting the FSI Interview Test for use in high school and college.

[7]By "level of content" I mean the quantity and complexity of the response given by the student in reply to a question. For example, let us presume the examiner asks two students the same question: "What do you eat for breakfast in the morning?" Student A replies: "A glass of milk and a muffin." Student B replies: "Usually I drink a glass of milk and eat a muffin or a piece of toast, but sometimes I have corn flakes and some orange juice. Occasionally, I don't eat any breakfast at all." Clearly, both students have answered the examiner's question, but the level of content in the answer of student B is so much higher, and his response so much more complete, that the difference in the two answers needs to be taken into consideration when one assigns points to their responses.

## Appendix

TABLE 1

| Pronunciation (1) | Grammar (3) | Vocabulary (2) | Fluency (1) | Level of Content (2) | Total Points |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| 2 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 18 |
| 3 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 27 |
| 4 | 12 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 36 |
| 5 | 15 | 10 | 5 | 10 | 45 |

TABLE 2

| A | | B | | C | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Points | Level | Points | Level | Points | Level |
| 0-15 | 1 | 0-10 | 1 | 0-9 | 1 |
| 16-32 | 2 | 11-22 | 2 | 10-19 | 2 |
| 33-45 | 3 | 23-34 | 3 | 20-29 | 3 |
| | | 35-45 | 4 | 30-39 | 4 |
| | | | | 40-45 | 5 |

# The Undergraduate Foreign Language Curriculum: Suggestions for Change

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Since the beginning of this decade when enrollments in foreign language courses began to decline, many language teachers have been questioning the validity of the traditional literature-oriented undergraduate curriculum. A good example is a recent article published in Profession 77 in which Rose L. Hayden delivers a blistering attack on the profession for what she considers to be our distorted sense of values. In her opinion in most departments "the emphasis is generally not placed on language training or pedagogy at all. An overriding concern with literary scholarship has distorted the educational process, often with bizarre results. Courses taught reflect the preference of the literary specialist. To teach basic language courses is akin to contracting a social disease. To like it is even worse."[1]

For dramatic effect Rose Hayden may have indulged herself in a bit of hyperbole, but she supports her position with some rather convincing statistics. Not only did enrollment drop thirty per cent between 1968-1974, but of those who did study a foreign language in this country during that period, only seventeen per cent could read, write or speak that language with ease. She concludes that it is no wonder employers in business and government have little confidence in the basic language skills of our graduates.[2] From this type of evidence and our personal experience, I believe many of us in the profession must agree that Rose Hayden's basic point is valid: the traditional major in literature, with minimal emphasis on language skills, has not met the practical needs of our students.

If we do accept her criticism, the problem is to determine what we can do to turn out graduates who are fluent in the language, without sacrificing our literature programs. Many of us are products of the type of graduate programs Rose Hayden describes, and we are committed to the belief that the study of literature is basic to a liberal arts education and to the understanding of foreign cultures. Yet it is clear that we must improve our language courses. At Lewis and Clark College an unexpected and unwelcome but required exercise in program evaluation forced us to face this apparent dilemma and to develop recommendations for improving our total program.

In 1974-75, as part of a general college evaluation for accreditation, our department was asked to do a "self-study." More specifically, we were asked to demonstrate that our goals were consistent with those of the institution and appropriate to the needs of our students. Finally and most difficult, we had to establish accountability, that is to prove that we were accomplishing what we claimed in our courses. In the rest of this paper I would like to describe to you some of the changes we have made--or are in process of making--as a result of our self-study. I am also going to be so presumptuous as to suggest some changes I believe necessary if we are to establish our credibility as professional language teachers. I would like to emphasize that these opinions are personal and do not represent a collective opinion of the Foreign Language Department of Lewis and Clark College.

The first and probably most difficult part of our self-study was our attempt to determine our present and former students' perception of the effectiveness of our total program in terms of their needs and expectations. Most of us had no previous experience in collecting and tabulating data. Fortunately, we had a visiting professor at the time, Sister Rita Rose Vistica, who had had some experience in that area and who designed the complete process of gathering, tabulating and analyzing the data.

As we began to analyze the voluminous data she collected, we were forced to face the reality that no more than ten per cent of our students were enrolled in literature courses, and of those that were, three-fourths had no intention of continuing their literary studies past the B.A. degree. In short, we had a very well developed curriculum in literature which corresponded to the needs of some three per cent of our students. We also found that most of the students were double majors, and considered their language studies to be an adjunct to a primary field such as international affairs or business. Consequently, their main interest was to acquire basic language skills. Although most of them liked our literature courses and appreciated their contribution to their liberal arts program, they lamented the dearth of more practical courses on such subjects as history, politics, methodology of language teaching, translating and interpreting and technical terminology for specific fields.

Faced with the overwhelming evidence that only a small percentage of our students were satisfied with our traditional major we decided to offer more options. As a result, we now have four major tracks instead of one. They are 1) the traditional major in French, German or Spanish, with an emphasis on literature; 2) a foreign language major, which requires student to take upper-division courses (but only one literature course) in two languages and one year of third; 3) a specialization in foreign literatures; and 4) a combination of English and foreign literature. We were able to adopt this multi-major program without making any significant change in our basic curriculum.

The most popular of the major options is the foreign language major. Although we are only in our third year of the program some thirty-five per cent of our students have opted for that track. My estimate is that within the next year or two that figure will exceed fifty per cent. If it does, we may find ourselves with fewer and fewer students in our literature courses.

To attempt to satisfy the need for a greater variety of subjects we have adopted a course entitled "Special Studies," which provides the flexibility to teach whatever is in demand at any given time. Under this general title we have given courses on film and literature, literature in translation, and history through literature. In the future we anticipate courses on economic institutions, business terminology, translating and interpreting. Such courses cannot normally be offered, however, without sacrificing literature courses.

Our self-study also emphasized the importance of study abroad for our language program. At Lewis and Clark we have a very active overseas study program with some six groups abroad each year. Student responses indicated that there is no factor as motivating to language students as the possibility of studying a language in a foreign country. Nor is there any other way for them to acquire the fluency we should require. Once back on campus, students normally continue their language study and, in turn, help to motivate other students. In addition, such a program draws interested language students to the campus. This year forty-one per cent of entering freshmen indicated that our overseas study program was the factor that determined their choice of Lewis and Clark.

The whole process of self-study also made us much more sensitive to the quality of our total language program. Consequently, we have made every effort to develop an efficient, highly articulated curriculum of language courses from first year through advanced composition. This has turned out to be a very frustrating project. In Spanish, for example, I have been unable to find any materials designed for an articulated two or three year program. The usual pattern in most institutions seems to be to use a direct method approach in first year, then to revert to a traditional grammar, literature method in second year. Third year courses depend entirely on the whim of the instructor and the availability of texts at the time.

When I worked in the United States government's English program in Latin America, we had a nine term course, with very specific goals for each level. At the end of the program, if a student demonstrated by examination a weakness in any area, we simply made him repeat the appropriate course. Every commercial school also has such articulated programs. Who do they not exist for college courses? If one surveys the myriad anthologies of short stories intended for second-year courses the answer seems obvious: our priority has been to teach literature at that level. It is time to change that priority and develop complete, efficient language programs for college courses. In order to do so we will have to encourage more research and publication in this area.

We must also accept the harsh reality that many college teachers have had little, if any training in the methodology of language teaching. I suggest we follow the advice of Rose Hayden and provide pedagogy workshops for all interested language teachers. Such workshops would go well beyond our informal discussions in professional meetings; they would be intensive study programs directed by experts in the field.

Finally, if the previous suggestion did not provoke any attacks of nausea, the last recommendation that I have probably will. Our self-study indicated a need for closer cooperation with local high schools. If we are to be the leaders in the field of foreign language study, it only seems common sense to work more closely with the high-school language departments. We should strive to improve our teacher training programs, so that no graduates from our institutions enter the teaching profession without adequate training in methodology as well as fluency in the language. We should also do everything possible to help high-school teachers develop in their schools an awareness of the need of foreign language study. Those schools, often staffed by our graduates, contain the potential students for our courses in the coming years. We ought to make ourselves available for talks in high schools on various aspects of language study.

Furthermore, we should consider different types of summer programs for high-school students. Most campus facilities get limited use in the summer; it would be an ideal time for intensive courses or live-in programs such as those at Middlebury College. Such activities could be an excellent way to recruit well-trained, advanced students to our regular college and university programs.

The above observations and suggestions support the position taken by Rose Hayden that there is a real need to give more consideration to all aspects of our language programs and, if necessary, to make changes in our curricula. For some professors who fit the stereotype Ms. Hayden so caustically describes, these changes may be very difficult; for others they will be welcome and overdue. However we accept them, I am convinced they will have to take place, if we are to convince the general citizenry and our students of the importance of foreign language study in colleges and universities.

## Notes

[1]Rose L. Hayden, "Relating Language to International Education: Some Do's and Don'ts," Profession 77 (Sept., 1977), p. 39. There are many articles that refer to this problem. For other examples see Frederick D. Eddy, "Staffing Foreign Language Departments in College and Universities: A Declaration of Principle," ADFL, 5, No. 3 (March, 1974), pp. 15-19; Sidney N. J. Zelson, "Curricular Problems in College Foreign Language Programs: Some Points for Consideration," ADFL, 5, No. 1 (Sept., 1973), pp. 26-29.

[2]Hayden, p. 39.